

The Quarterly Journal of the **LIBRARY of CONGRESS**





The Quarterly Journal of the LIBRARY of CONGRESS

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Editor

FREDERICK MOHR

Associate Editors

JAMES HARDIN

IRIS NEWSOM

EVELYN SINCLAIR

Production Manager

JOHANNA CRAIG

Designer

GERARD A. VALERIO

Publisher

DANA J. PRATT

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Roy Wilkins's long career of service to the NAACP and the cause of civil rights was marked by diplomacy and quiet persistence.



Illustration by Linley Sambourne from *The Water-Babies* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1901).

Editor's Note

The poet, according to Charles Lamb, can be identified as one who "dreams being awake" and yet "is not possessed by his subject but . . . has dominion over it." For Lionel Trilling this means that "the poet is in command of his fantasy, while it is exactly the mark of the neurotic that he is possessed by his fantasy." Not entirely by coincidence, command of fantasy appears as a recurrent theme in this issue of the *Quarterly Journal*.

Natalie Babbitt, for example, reminds us that classic fantasy is not universally delightful when she identifies one of the oldest of her dozen opinions as being simply that Charles Kingsley's *Water-Babies* is "a silly book." Some eight years after *Westward Ho!*, Kingsley invented the Water-Baby to amuse (and probably mystify) his youngest son, then four years old, and, according to his daughter Rose, wrote the book at a rate of one chapter per hour. The pace, however, was not so furious as to preclude administration of cruel and unusual punishment to such skeptics as Professor Ptthmlnsprts, who rejected fantasy simply because he could not command it and consequently became so possessed by his reality that seeing was no longer believing, at least when it came to *Water-Babies*.

Mary Ison presents a portfolio of Jessie Willcox Smith's illustrations for the 1916 edition of *The Water-Babies*. The Smith drawings, originals of which are in the Library's Prints and Photographs Division, tempt one to conclude that in this case the artist was in somewhat better command of fantasy than the author.

Michael Patrick Hearn retraces his steps along the sometimes tortuous but ultimately rewarding gray marble road that led to the discoveries revealed in *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*. The journey reflects not only an admirable scholarly persistence but also a command of the kind of

fantasy that separates the wizards from the humbugs.

Ray Bradbury, a master craftsman in the fantastic trades, contributes a poem that defines the origins of his science fictions. Jon Newsom, whom most *QJ* readers will remember as the author of recent articles on composer David Raksin, the American brass band movement, and music for animated films, rather than for his portrayal of William Billings, returns with an even more specifically fantastic accompaniment to Ray Bradbury's poem.

Charles Jahant, who recently donated his collection of photographs of opera singers to the Library of Congress, traces the beginnings of that collection to his childhood years and presents a number of classic examples from it. In the world of opera, of course, fantasy is not merely a necessity but an obsession.

Sylvia Lyons Render brings together a pictorial tribute to the late Roy Wilkins, whose persistent and unyielding struggle for racial justice spanned half a century and created realities out of concepts that many had feared (and some had hoped) would remain forever fantasies.

The reader who finds fantasy appealing can derive particular poetic pleasure from closer encounters with the sources of fantasy—in the Library of Congress or in any library anywhere. Those inclined toward overextension of metaphor might even envision the library as the ultimate temple of fantasy, with all distinctions between fiction and nonfiction having been obliterated through the assumption of completion inherent in the act of printing. But they would be missing the point, which is simply that for the imaginative a library, like a fantasy, is its own reward.

FM



Watercolor by Jon Newsom.

Of What Is Past, or Passing, or to Come

BY RAY BRADBURY

Of what is Past, or Passing, or to Come,
These things I sense and sing, and try to sum.
The apeman with his cave in need of fire,
The tiger to be slain, his next desire.
The mammoth on the hoof a banquet seems,
How bring the mammoth down fills apeman's dreams.
How taunt the sabre-tooth and pull his bite?
How cadge the flame to end an endless night?
All this the apeman sketches on his cave
In cowards' arts that teach him to be brave.
So, beasts and fire that live beyond his lair
Are drawn in science-fictions everywhere.
The walls are full of schemes that sum and teach,
To help the apeman reach beyond his reach.
While all his ape-companions laugh and shout:
"What *are* those stupid blueprints all about?!"
Give up your science fictions, clean the cave!"
But apeman knows his sketching chalk can save,
And knowing, learning, moves him to rehearse
True actions in the world to Death reverse.
With axe he knocks the tiger's smile to dust,
Then runs to slay the mammoth with spear thrust;
The hairy mountain falls, the forests quake,
Then fire is swiped to cook a mammoth steak.

Three problems thus are solved by Art on wall:
The tiger, mammoth, fire, the one, the all.
So these first science fictions circled thought
And then strode forth and all the real facts sought,
And then on wall new science fictions drew,
That run through history and end with . . . *you*.

Copyright © Ray Bradbury 1982.

RAY BRADBURY, the author of hundreds of stories, articles, books, plays, and scripts, has provided us with a poem which he says "explains the genesis of my S-F stories!" He is currently working on an opera titled *Leviathan 99*, based on the Moby Dick mythology, but dramatized in outer space. His musical *Dandelion Wine* is playing in Los Angeles, and his screenplay of his own novel *Something Wicked This Way Comes* has just been filmed, starring Jason Robards, Jr., and directed by Jack Clayton.

Discovering Oz (the Great and Terrible) at the Library of Congress

BY MICHAEL PATRICK HEARN

One never knows what one will find in the Library of Congress. Being the depository of materials submitted to the Copyright Office of the United States of America, this institution, the largest of its kind in the world, is said to contain at least one copy of everything printed or recorded which requires legal copyright. However, one should not go to the Library with the expectation that it will have a copy of everything that has been published in the United States in the last two hundred years. One quickly learns that, even when cataloged, a requested publication may be "not on shelf." Over the years, many materials have been lost, stolen, misfiled, worn out, or just thrown away.

The Library of Congress is indeed the library of the Congress, and it is only through the good graces of the House and the Senate that it is open to the public. Not even the British Library, which is the copyright depository of the United Kingdom, serves the general public; entrance is allowed only to those possessing a card of admission approved by the British Library Board. Fortunately, the staff of the Library of Congress is well aware of the necessity of preserving the works of the past, and there is perhaps no other institution in the world so rich in materials printed, recorded, and filmed than the Library of Congress. One is reminded of *The New Yorker* cartoon of a little girl asking whether the Library of Congress might have even *The Pokey Little Puppy*. And it does, too.

When I first encountered the riches of the

Library of Congress, I was a novice. I had just completed my sophomore year at Bard College when I signed the contract for my first book, *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*. At the time, I had never published anything. I submitted my proposal unsolicited, and miraculously it survived the "slush pile" of Clarkson N. Potter, Inc. The publisher knew nothing about me, but on the recommendation of Martin Gardner, the author of *The Annotated Alice* and *The Wizard of Oz and Who He Was*, he nevertheless signed me up. I only met Mr. Potter when I delivered the manuscript; during the appointment, I overheard him in the next room ask one of his editors, "How old is he?" Apparently both he and Gardner had thought I was a teacher, not a student, at Bard. So too did George A. Woods, an editor of *The New York Times Book Review*; when he contacted me at school about an article on my book, he asked for "Professor" Hearn.

Oddly I received no encouragement from my professors. Academic interest in juvenile literature was still in its infancy, and my adviser told me that I was wasting my time on L. Frank Baum and *The Wizard of Oz*. The New Critics were still in power, and they argued that one read a text without regard to the author's life or other sources of inspiration and influence; influential then too were the interpretive critics of the Yale School who believed that the reader must reform

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" Illustration by W. W. Denslow from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Courtesy of Michael Patrick Hearn.



the work according to his personal vision, no matter how irrelevant it might be to the author's intent. I, however, was as suspicious of these current critical movements as I had been of Freudian, Marxist, and other previously fashionable ideological approaches to literature.

What I wanted *The Annotated Wizard of Oz* to be was not just another interpretation of the famous (and controversial) children's book but rather a study of the whole phenomenon of Oz. L. Frank Baum had an inexhaustible imagination and an unlimited faith in new forms of art and entertainment. Remembered primarily for his books for boys and girls, Baum made significant contributions to several of America's lively arts. Unfortunately he was more of a Colonel Sellers than a John D. Rockefeller, and more than once his investment in some wild idea led to bankruptcy. One of his most eccentric schemes was *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, for whose publi-



L. Frank Baum. Photograph by Dana Hull, Chicago, 1908. Prints and Photographs Division.



"Exactly so! I am a humbug." Illustration by W. W. Denslow from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Courtesy of Michael Patrick Hearn.

cation Baum and his illustrator, W. W. Denslow, paid the printing costs. Baum believed that American children needed "a modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heart-aches and nightmares are left out." To make his unorthodox fairy tale even more alluring, Baum had Denslow fill its pages with countless two-color textual illustrations and twenty-four full-page color plates. Surely *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was the most ambitiously conceived, the most lavishly illustrated American children's book of its day; and for once, Baum produced an immediate and enduring success. *The Wizard of Oz* is now an American classic, and one reason for its survival is that Baum early found novel ways to keep the land of Oz and its odd characters before the public. Not only was *The Wizard of Oz* the first of a long and successful series of Oz books, but it also inspired a long-running musical extravaganza, an early Sunday comic page, and a series of silent motion pictures which Baum both wrote and helped to produce. So, for me to treat Baum and Oz properly, it was necessary to consider

"So the Woggle-Bug strutted proudly along the street." Illustration by Ike Morgan from *The Woggle-Bug Book* by L. Frank Baum, published in 1905. Rare Book and Special Collections Division.





Advertisement for *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, featuring drawings by John R. Neill. The notice in the middle was written by L. Frank Baum. From *Moving Picture World*, vol. 21, July–September 1914, page 377. Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division.

not only his books but also all the other various forms his tales of Oz sometimes took.

Baum was an extraordinarily productive writer. In addition to his fourteen Oz stories, he

churned out about sixty other books (not all of them for children), as well as many newspaper and magazine stories and poems, plays, songs, and film scripts between the publication of *The Wizard of Oz* in 1900 and his death in 1919. Having amassed from the age of nine a respectable collection of this material, I was now determined at least to see everything written by L. Frank Baum, both published and unpublished. In my naiveté, I did not know where I might fall on something in his other work pertinent to *The Wizard of Oz*. My preliminary research was

made easier by Russell P. MacFall's excellent Baum biography *To Please A Child* and by the *Baum Bugle*, a semischolarly journal devoted to the life and work of those associated with the Oz books and published since 1957 by The International Wizard of Oz Club, Inc. The editors of the *Baum Bugle* were most generous in providing much rare and unpublished material and in suggesting leads for further research. And soon I learned that Baum was even more prolific than I had suspected, for in my searches I stumbled upon much previously unrecorded work.

I arrived at the Library of Congress in awe of its vast holdings and with the belief that I would find here everything I needed for my book. I was at first disappointed to learn that when researching juvenile literature one rarely finds the obvious at the Library of Congress. Apparently the children's collections have suffered from past borrowings, since many of the library's copies of important juvenile literature are no longer on the shelves. Fortunately, someone had the foresight to pull together an excellent special collection of children's books in the Rare Book Room. It was here that I found *The Woggle-Bug Book* (1905), which while not one of Baum's best efforts, is certainly one of the rarest. Unfortunately, the Rare Book Room contained no first editions of the Oz books—not even of *The Wizard of Oz*.

However, the problem of *The Wizard of Oz* was clarified by correspondence in the elusive "Red Letter File" of the Copyright Office. When Bobbs-Merrill applied for copyright of the re-issue of Baum's book as *The New Wizard of Oz* in 1903, the office replied that neither Baum nor his publisher George M. Hill had bothered to deposit two copies of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* when it was published in 1900, and so technically it had never been legally copyrighted. Bobbs-Merrill immediately sent a copy of the corrected Hill edition, and it is this book which is in the Rare Book Room. Sadly, no one in this division thought of removing from the general collections copies of the later Oz books which had been deposited for copyright. However, this neglect is not surprising. In the 1920s when Anne Carroll Moore banned the Oz books from the Children's Reading Room of the New York Public Library, librarians across the country followed this censorship of Baum's work. It is only



Sheet music cover for "The Woggle-Bug," by L. Frank Baum. Music by Frederick Chapin. Music Division.

recently that *The Wizard of Oz* and its sequels have been universally recognized as classics of juvenile literature.

What I could not find at the Library of Congress, I discovered in several university special collections of L. Frank Baum materials—those accrued by C. Beecher Hogan at Yale, by Roland Baughman at Columbia, and by Russell P. MacFall at Syracuse. The New York Public Library also provided several important archives such as the Henry Goldsmith collection of original drawings by W. W. Denslow for *The Wizard of Oz* in the Prints Room and the publicity scrapbooks kept by the road manager of the 1902 *Wizard of Oz* musical in the Theatre Collection at Lincoln Center. Other items which I lacked in my own collection were kindly loaned to me by Martin Gardner or by Justin G. Schiller. My searches led also to several unlikely sources such as the Arents Tobacco Collection of the New York Public Library, which houses important Baum letters and the copy of *The Wizard of Oz* the author gave his

mother. Although the curator of the Berg Collection told me to go and wash my hands, I was always treated courteously, despite my age. I later learned that undergraduates are forbidden to use most special collections; but fortunately I had always written beforehand about the book I was researching, so I was never denied admittance. The curators were always generous with their time and help and frequently provided uncataloged material generally not available to the public.

Although I traveled up and down the East Coast in search of Oz, the center of my studies remained Washington, D.C. The Library of Congress proved to be invaluable for checking leads from other collections. For example, a letter from Jack Snow in the Butler Library at Columbia University mentioned that Baum had once written for *The Philosopher*, and fortunately the Library of Congress still had a complete run of this obscure literary journal. Here I found in the December 1897 issue an uncharacteristic tale of the supernatural—"A Shadow Cast Before"—a previously unrecorded work and one of Baum's earliest known short stories.

I got into the habit of checking under "Baum" and "Denslow" in every special collection I visited; for example, while working in the Horgan Archive at Yale I found a cache of letters from Denslow to Alfred Stieglitz in the manuscript collection, and before this discovery I had no idea that the illustrator of *The Wizard of Oz* knew the famous photographer. Likewise, I consulted every appropriate division and every relevant file at the Library of Congress. Others (notably Dick Martin and Alla T. Ford when preparing *The Musical Fantasies of L. Frank Baum*) had researched these collections in Washington, but no one before me had explored every possibility. My persistence proved profitable: In the Prints and Photographs Division, I found several fine unpublished portraits of Baum; in the file of copyrights of musical compositions, I discovered the title of a previously unknown Baum play, "King Jonah XIII"; and in the assignment file, I located contracts for such projects as Baum's 1905 musical *The Woggle-Bug* and the Baum family's negotiations with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and Walt Disney on motion pictures based on the Oz books. I now knew that when researching at the Library of Congress

and the Copyright Office I must follow what the *Village Voice* used to advise: "Expect the unexpected."

At one time, copyright for a play required the deposit of two copies of the script at the Copyright Office. Although many of these manuscripts were disposed of long ago, the Copyright Office fortunately still had that of *The Woggle Bug*, Baum's musical based on his second Oz book, *The Marvelous Land of Oz* (1904). This discovery led me to the Library's Music Division to check the score of *The Woggle Bug*, with lyrics by Baum and music by Frederic Chapin. By error, I looked in the composer catalog under Baum rather than Chapin and discovered a previously unrecorded song, "Down Among the Marshes: The Alligator Song," with words and music both by Baum. This piece proved to be from the unproduced *Prince Silverwings*, a play Baum had written with Mrs. Carter Harrison in 1903; evidence for this conclusion came from the printed synopsis of the musical in the MacFall Collection at Syracuse University and from a letter in the Butler Library from Baum to Isadore Witmark, who published the song. I eventually did secure the score for *The Woggle Bug* in the Music Division, but even this request revealed the unexpected: The file contained, besides the twelve pieces of sheet music for the 1905 play, two earlier songs composed by Chapin, one of which had words by Arthur Gilgelsie and which, with only slight variation, was interpolated into *The Woggle Bug* and credited to L. Frank Baum.

Having had such success with Baum's theatrical work, I went to the Motion Picture Section with the faint hope that it might contain some information on the Oz Film Manufacturing Company, which Baum founded in 1914 and which failed the following year. I was delighted and certainly surprised to learn that the collection contained prints of two of the long-forgotten Oz films, *His Majesty, the Scarecrow of Oz* (released as *The New Wizard of Oz*) and *The Magic Cloak of Oz*. It is a miracle that anything produced by this failed film company

"Dorothy's Christmas Tree," from the comic pages of the *Minneapolis Journal*, December 10, 1904.
Courtesy of Michael Patrick Hearn.

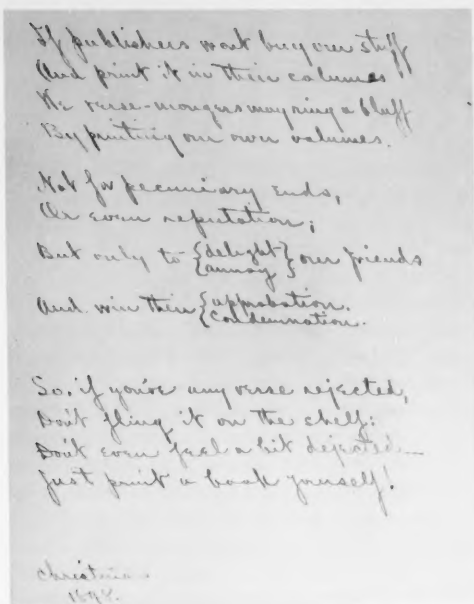
should have survived; so little was known about the firm that no one was sure whether or not *The Magic Cloak of Oz* was actually released—until the print suddenly surfaced in the Library of Congress. But the American Film Institute (which deposits these restored films in the Library) has accomplished many wonders in its heroic preservation of movie history. It was exhilarating to finally view these previously “lost” motion pictures by Baum, movies that I had once believed to have been destroyed. They were fascinating for the way in which they differed from the books on which they were based: *The Magic Cloak of Oz* was a fairly accurate dramatization of *Queen Zixi of Ix* (1905); but *His Majesty, the Scarecrow of Oz* departed so radically from *The Wizard of Oz* that Baum easily incorporated elements of its script into his next Oz book, *The Scarecrow of Oz* (1915), perhaps one of the earliest “novelizations” of a motion picture. Although the Motion Picture Division did not have a print of the first Oz film, *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, it had the typescript of the movie’s scenario, which Baum had deposited for copyright in 1914. I also discovered the copyright descriptions of two additional Oz Film Manufacturing Company productions, two shorts called *The Magic Bon Bons* and *The Country Circus*, which Baum himself may have scripted and which were released by Victor after the Oz company’s failure. It had been rumored that such films had been made, but no evidence was known to exist until these copyright entries were found.

Another incomparable source for the researcher is the Newspaper and Current Periodical Room. Fortunately, at the time I was working on *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, the library still preserved the original bound volumes of many of the newspapers published in various parts of the country at the turn of the century. Although it generally took several days to transfer the requested numbers from the warehouse in Alexandria to the Library of Congress, the wait was usually well worth it. With these enormous fragile volumes, I was able to trace contemporary opinions of Baum and his work through book reviews as well as to follow the runs of the musicals (*The Wizard of Oz*, *The Woggle Bug*, *The Tik-Tok Man of Oz*) and the “Radio-Plays,” Baum’s 1908-9 lecture tour,

which combined a colored slide show with hand-tinted motion pictures. In these searches, I also discovered several revealing interviews with Baum or Denslow, as well as much previously unrecorded work by both of these creators of Oz. Particularly interesting were several early contributions Baum made to the *Chicago Times-Herald* in the 1890s, a few years before he published any of his children’s books; these discoveries showed that Baum had some success as a writer somewhat earlier than had previously been reported. At least two of the poems in the *Times-Herald* were later included in *By the Candelabra’s Glare* (1898), a small collection of verse which Baum set in type, printed, and bound himself for his family and friends. In a poem he wrote in the copy he gave to his favorite sister, Mary Louise Brewster, and which is now in the Rare Book Room of the Library of Congress, Baum suggested that he decided to publish the book himself because editors were reluctant to take his work. Only two years later, L. Frank Baum became the most sought-after of American writers of children’s books.

At the time I was researching *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, it was still possible to trace through the library’s bound newspapers the entire seventy-five-year development of the American Sunday comics, from *The Yellow Kid* to *Doonesbury*, and it was in these papers that I solved an old Oz puzzle. In several public and private collections of Baumiana were drawings of the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman by Denslow, but where they appeared had as yet not been determined. They were neither in *The Wizard of Oz* nor in Denslow’s *Scarecrow and the Tin Man* (1904), a picture book the artist published after his split with Baum; evidently they were for a comic page, and some carried the date 1904 or 1905 and references to the McClure Newspaper Syndicate. Despite the record in Denslow’s account book that McClure did pay the artist for a series of “Scarecrow and Tin Man” drawings, most comic strip experts were convinced that they were never used.

While trying to trace the various papers where Baum’s comic-page *Queer Visitors from the Marvelous Land of Oz* appeared, I fell upon several episodes of *Billy Bounce*, an unrecorded comic strip by Denslow which was the source for his children’s book of 1906. Because this



L. Frank Baum wrote this unpublished poem on the flyleaf of the copy of *By Candelabra's Glare* that he presented to his sister, Mary Louise Brewster. Baum printed this book of his poems in his own workshop in Chicago in 1898. Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

strip too was commissioned by McClure, I began searching through the papers which carried *Billy Bounce* for a Scarecrow and Tin Man comic page; but when this yielded nothing, I checked randomly through any paper for December 1904. Finally I stumbled on "Dorothy's Christmas Tree," written and illustrated by Denslow, in the *Detroit Free Press* of December 14, 1904, but this was the only episode published in that paper. Encouraged by this small victory, I persisted in my search. Just before my book went into production, I discovered in the *Minneapolis Journal* for December 10, 1904, through February 18, 1905, eleven installments of "Denslow's Scarecrow and Tin-Man." Even then my research was not done, since there were still three illusive drawings which I had not seen in print. Only after *The Annotated Wizard of Oz* was published did I uncover the complete run of fourteen episodes, in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

for December 18, 1904, through March 10, 1905. Although they were Denslow's work rather than Baum's, the discovery of the comic pages nevertheless was like unearthing a long-forgotten Oz book.

Sadly, now that the Library has converted many of these old bound volumes to microfilm, the originals have been disposed of and with them all the rare early full-color comic pages. Although I did mention the problem to several librarians, nothing was done to preserve this invaluable archive of that unique American art form, the comic strip. Space is the reason for the conversion to film. Unfortunately, not only is microfilm wearing on the eyes, but its use has also deprived picture researchers of important primary sources for illustrations.

Pictures were vital to *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, and I relied heavily on the Photoduplication Service of the Library of Congress to provide photographs to be used as illustrations in my book. I learned quickly that while the quality of reproduction was no different, the cost of positive prints from the Library was considerable less than that charged by most other institutions. And no publication fees were demanded by the national library (other institutions required between \$10 and \$175 per photograph for one-time reproduction in a book). The only drawback to using the Photoduplication Service was that, because of an enormous backlog of orders, it generally took longer to receive prints from the service than from other labs, and so I had to put in my requests well in advance of my deadlines.

During those years that I worked on *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, the Library of Congress became like a second home to me. By the time I completed the book, I had become familiar with almost every custodial division of this extraordinary institution. Even now it is impossible for me to visit Washington without dropping by to check the card catalog for something which I had been looking for in vain elsewhere. No, there is no place like the Library of Congress.

MICHAEL PATRICK HEARN is the author of *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, *The Annotated Christmas Carol*, *The Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, *The Art of the Broadway Poster*, and other critical works. He is currently working on a biography of L. Frank Baum.

Saying What You Think

BY NATALIE BABBITT

Someone said once that the older we get, the more aware we are that we don't know much, and that's all right—I don't have any quarrel with that. But the trouble is, it's also true that the older we get, the more we're expected to sound as if we know a great deal.

It took me a long time to accept the idea that I *had* to know things, in the first place, and even longer to accept the idea that I would from time to time have to explain what I knew, and even longer than that to realize that what I knew was more than likely going to be challenged by someone who knew something else altogether. That can be very intimidating if you haven't had much practice. There's nothing so hard to defend as an opinion.

I had a lot of opinions when I was a child, hundreds and hundreds, but was almost never asked to defend them. Then, later on, I went through a period when I had no opinions at all. After that came a stretch when I had three or four opinions but was mostly too timid to articulate them and even less able to defend them when challenged. I have in the last fifteen years arrived at a stage where I have, oh, maybe as many as a dozen opinions, all tried and true, and I can defend them all if I have to. What's more, I don't care any more whether anyone agrees with me or not. I am not even alarmed any more when I meet someone who has maybe as many as fifty or sixty opinions. As you know, a person with fifty or sixty opinions lives an easier life

Illustrations for this article were drawn by Natalie Babbitt and are reproduced with the permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc.

From *Small Poems* by Valerie Worth. Pictures copyright © 1972 by Natalie Babbitt.



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than the rest of us. Decisions are a snap, judgments can be reached in the wink of an eye, the mind is as easy to make up as a daybed. But now when I am confronted by someone like that, I can listen with comparative calm and, while I'm listening, I just take out one of my opinions and roll it around in my head without bothering anyone about it, and it's very reassuring. One opinion of mine that is very good for this purpose, an opinion so old it's way back at Number Two on my list, is that *The Water-Babies* by Charles Kingsley is a silly book.

I can defend that opinion, chapter and verse, to anyone who wishes to challenge it. But I couldn't always, and that's what I decided to talk about tonight. *The Water-Babies* was, after all, one of the books on my mother's list of children's classics—a list put out by persons unknown—and by the time my sister and I were through with grammar school, she had read every one of them aloud to us.

I remember being alarmed by parts of *Hans Brinker* and *Heidi*, and we never heard the ending of *The Yearling* because my mother couldn't get through it without weeping. *Robinson Crusoe* was a little dull and, as I've said, *The Water-Babies* was silly. And I was left pretty much untouched by *Robin Hood*, *Peter Pan*, and a number of others. But I loved *Alice*, *Penrod*, and most of the *Just So Stories*. Except for *Alice*, the illustrations in these books had nothing at all to do with which of them I liked or didn't like. And I don't think the stories themselves had as much to do with it as you might expect. It seems to have had mainly to do with the language used—whether or not it was funny, unusual, and evocative. And so when Charles Kingsley said in *The Water-Babies* that "Tom was always a brave, determined little English boy, who never knew when he was beaten,"¹ I was not amused.

I suppose I was word-conscious at an early age, because, though we weren't scholars, we were nevertheless word people. My father loved puns and jokes and could make us laugh over and over again at the same things. He was fond of doggerel like "round and round the rugged rock the ragged rascal ran," and I think he made an effort to make his own speech fresh and funny. So I had a tendency to like books that seemed to me to have a way with words. The



From *Small Poems* by Valerie Worth. Pictures copyright © 1972 by Natalie Babbitt.

stories themselves didn't have to be funny, necessarily, but they certainly had to be diverting, and they had to have a hero with whom it would be nice to change places. I don't think I thought very much about content or the thrust of an argument. I don't recall our ever discussing that aspect. But occasionally it was so obvious that it hit you in the face. That was one of the troubles with *The Water-Babies*. The whole family disliked *The Water-Babies*, though we dutifully read it all the way through, and I am much gratified by the fact that it doesn't seem to be required any more.

Beyond this—the congenial hero and the language—I remember being beguiled by the environment in which a story was read. We read aloud more often in the summers, particularly during my father's vacations, when we would sit in a cushioned swing hung in a corner of the screened porch of my mother's mother's cottage at a place called Indian Lake in northwestern Ohio. It was lovely to curl up there beside my mother on a hot afternoon and listen to stories. It would have been almost impossible to dislike any author's works—except Charles Kingsley's—under those circumstances, the entire ambience was so charming. My father was always off blissfully fishing—or about to go blissfully fishing—or just coming back from blissfully fishing. My grandmother seemed always to be in the kitchen either baking a pie or making a kind



From *Kneeknock Rise*. Copyright © 1970 by Natalie Babbitt.

of candy we had a fondness for, which in hindsight seems truly ghastly since its sole ingredients were powdered sugar, peanut butter, and cold mashed potatoes. And the amusement park across the road was always in full swing so that the narrative my mother was reading was punctuated by the gradual crescendo and diminuendo of the roller coaster and the shrieking of its happy victims. It was a backdrop Lewis Carroll would have understood and thoroughly approved of, in fiction if not in life.

The books we read by ourselves were not on my mother's list, but she didn't seem to mind. My sister preferred to go off alone, up in a tree if there was a good one nearby, and cry over *Little Women* or *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, while I ate oranges in my bedroom and read fairy tales. And in the evenings my father read Arthur Conan Doyle's *The White Company* and his Rafael Sabatini novels over and over again, as well as every detective story he could get his hands on. Curiously, I don't remember my mother reading to herself at all, but I suppose she must have.

But I want you to understand that we didn't talk about books. We simply enjoyed them or didn't enjoy them, the way we enjoyed or didn't enjoy eating, depending on the menu. Books were a normal part of our daily lives, and beyond the list of children's classics, no one told us we should read such and such, or shouldn't read so and so. We were entirely unselfconscious about it.

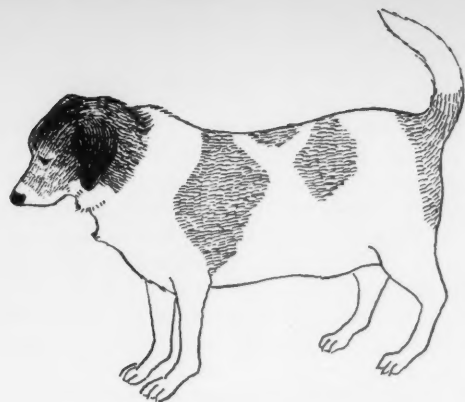
And then, during her adolescence, my sister suddenly developed another point of view about reading. I'm not sure how it began. But all at once she was plowing through very difficult books—or so they seemed then—and though she didn't force them on me or our parents, still

she seemed to me to be expressing silent but palpable disapproval of my fairy tales and my father's whodunits. Some of her new tastes may have been implanted by a series of curmudgeonly English teachers in high school, but however it began, she was soon off in corners every night reading Faulkner and Melville—the days for reading aloud being largely over—while my mother and I played anagrams. Looking back, I know she loved these books and I understand why, but at the time, since she never laughed aloud or even smiled while she was reading, I couldn't understand what she saw in them. But she was a straight-A student—a hard and conscientious worker—while I avoided everything that didn't come easily, so I wrote off her new reading habits as the tiresome behavior of a grind and began to devour my father's Sabatinis, which I assure you I enjoyed very much indeed.

Needless to say, knowing what we now know about sibling rivalry, my preferences were no doubt partly dictated by a strong desire to identify myself in opposition to my sister, but it is just as true that a lot of my distaste for the books I had to read in school had to do with the way they were presented. They were homework, whereas the reading I did on my own was fun.

I discovered a lot of books on my own, outside of school and college, that had they been assigned to me by a teacher, might well have seemed just as painful as *Oliver Twist* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. I read Tolstoy and Dreiser and Dickens and Sinclair Lewis, and a





number of others too dubious to mention, and found them wonderful, and was launched on a bad habit I still have of discovering an author and proceeding to read straight through the entire oeuvre without a pause. This is a bad habit because a writer's devices and biases soon begin to stick out, and his work becomes predictable by the time you're into the third or fourth novel. Still, the point is, I read for the great pleasure it gave me but never really talked about it to anybody.

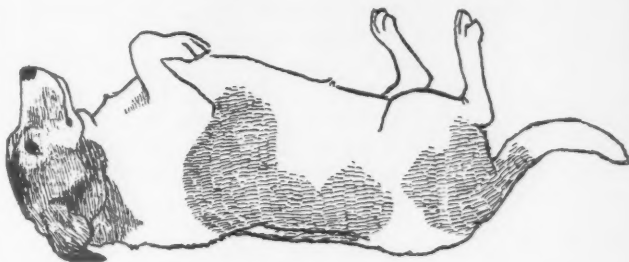
I married, after college, a man who was in the process of acquiring a Ph.D. in American studies with a concentration in American literature. I didn't marry him for his Ph.D. but rather for a number of other reasons having more to do with fun. And a good thing, too, since we didn't at all have the same taste in books. One day early in our marriage I had been reading something or other and said enthusiastically that I liked it, and this man I had married turned a shrewd professorial eye on me and said, "Why?"

Believe it or not, all through twelve years of school and four years of college, no one had ever asked me that question. I had been led and sometimes dragged through large numbers of works I have comfortably forgotten without my own opinion about them ever having been solicited. The stories we read aloud at home we either liked or didn't like, but we never talked about why. And in school, if the teacher or professor thought a writer was important, who was I to contradict in exams and term papers? You gave the professors what they wanted, and what they wanted was not your opinions, but your acceptance of their opinions. At least, that is what I remember.

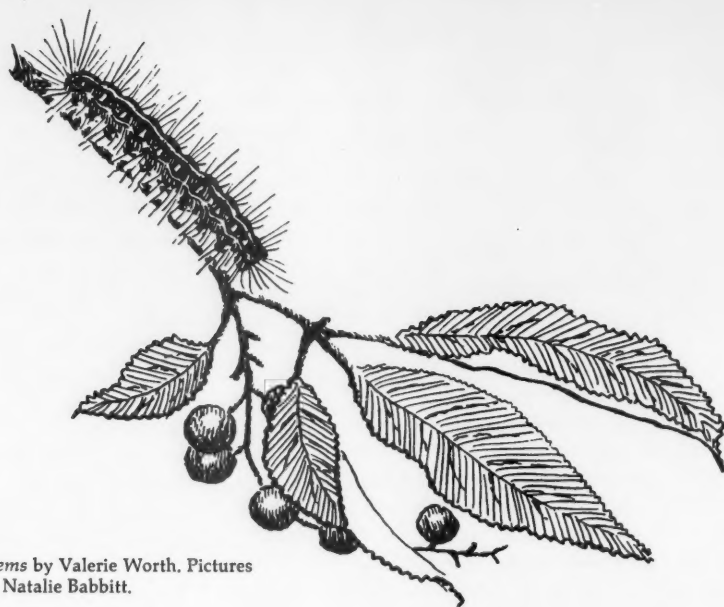
And anyway, I was vaguely ashamed of not liking writers like Thomas Hardy and William

Faulkner. And that is important, I think, that sense of shame. We are fond of assuming that children are so unselfconscious and direct that they can always be depended on to point out that the Emperor has no clothes on. Some children are unselfconscious and direct, for a while. But they get it pounded out of them. We all learn pretty quickly that honesty is not always the best policy when it comes to such hard-to-explain areas as opinions. On the whole, it seems safer to lean with the prevailing wind—to wear the stylish but uncomfortable shoes, to eat the snails, to read Charles Kingsley. Or else suffer the consequences: to be ostracized, laughed at, or stoned in the streets.

My father, a happy exception, resisted all efforts to civilize him, and why not? He had an adored uncle who deserted from the Spanish-American War, went West, and then came back to Columbus selling patent medicine in partnership with a thoroughly disreputable Indian. He



set up shop in a wagon at the foot of the state-house steps where he could joyfully accost his brother, my grandfather, as that very proper gentleman came down from his office in his tall silk hat—my grandfather was "in Government"—and embarrass him nearly to tears. And my grandmother, who used to sit rocking on the front porch with James Thurber's mother, laughing at her funny stories, "got religion" in middle age and used to scour the streets of Columbus for bums and tramps and bring them home for Sunday dinner. With things like that in your family, you either escape into Kingsley and snails with a vengeance and never admit to Columbus, or you spend your whole life laughing. My father was of the latter persuasion. He



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had a hard time taking anything very seriously, except the Republican party.

But my mother took lots of things seriously, and so it was difficult sometimes to know what to think. I solved this problem the way many of us do—I kept my mouth shut. As Hamlet would have advised, I assumed a virtue if I had it not, and what virtue I assumed had mainly to do with who I was with at the time. It was a new version of an old song: "If you're not near the people you agree with, agree with the people you're near."

Still, here I was, faced with a new husband who wanted to know why I liked a certain book. What to answer? After all, he was the expert. I had no idea what I was expected to say. Maybe I wasn't supposed to like the book. Maybe if I liked it, I was revealing ignorance or bad taste. Maybe he would stone me in the street—metaphorically, of course. In those simpler days, pre-Betty Friedan, it didn't occur to me to say that I liked it because I liked it and, "So what, Buster, you want to make something of it?" As I recall, I mumbled something incoherent and changed the subject. But I thought about it a lot, that simple and yet not so simple "why," and my reflexive reaction to it, which was to wonder what I was expected to say rather than to wonder how best

I could say what I really felt. I think in many ways it marked a turning point.

For, finally, though it's good to have an opinion, it isn't enough by itself. It isn't enough simply to say that you do or you don't like something. It's terribly important to know why, to be able to examine your own reactions and not be afraid to expound on them and, if necessary, defend them. This is true in all the parts of our lives, not just with books. But books are a good place to begin because books are readily accessible containers for someone else's ideas and style, and they give the reader a good way to measure those things against his own.

Maurice Sendak has said that little children often like or dislike their picture books for reasons that may be obscure to them as well as to their parents. But surely by the time children are ready for novels like *The Water-Babies*, they are articulate enough, and enough in touch with their feelings, to make talking about their reading valuable. And surely, parents and teachers can make an effort to be liberal and accept the fact that no single book will be admired by a whole classful of children.

My mother read aloud the children's classics to my sister and me because some unknown person had said they were the books we ought to

hear, and it didn't occur to us to challenge that opinion, even though we were less than enthralled with some of them. They are all still in print today, including *The Water-Babies*; still on the bookstore shelves labeled "Classics." I know because I went and looked.

Although I realize that reading is not as popular a pastime as it used to be, and although I also realize that some children would not read at all if it weren't for classroom assignments, nevertheless it makes me uncomfortable to know that my story *Tuck Everlasting* is required reading in some classrooms. My sympathies are entirely with the children, for many will react to *Tuck* as I well might have—with a shudder. Many will find its language too "fancy," its pace too slow, its topic unsettling, the behavior of its hero incomprehensible. *Tuck* is not a crowd-pleaser. But it has apparently come to seem useful, particularly for classroom discussions about death—though that is not, to my mind, its central theme. If the classroom discussions could be about whether the children like it as a story and why—or why not—that would be useful. If children could be encouraged to examine their own reactions to it as a piece of fiction, and not simply talk about whether they would like to live forever or not—which is a separate question—that would be useful. That would be a good first step toward developing a critical eye. If some of those who didn't like it, for their own reasons, could admit at the same time that it was nevertheless a good book—or, if some of those who did like it, for their own reasons, could admit at the same time that it was nevertheless a bad book—that would be invaluable.

But the letters I get indicate that for the most part this is not what is happening. On occasion I will get a large envelope which encloses letters from every child in a class, and all are complimentary. Obviously, the letters are part of a class assignment, an exercise, and do not involve any independent thought at all. Recently, in fact, I got one like that from a boy named Brian Burden from Mesquite, Texas, which begins: "Dear Ms. Babbitt, I'm writing you a letter because I have to, it's a class assignment. I don't really write to authors normally."

The teacher has said, "Now we shall all write to an author," and what emerges is the same

kind of good manners that we see in a Christmas thank-you note to Aunt Minnie enthusing over the lovely record album of Kate Smith's greatest hits. These poor children have just had another lesson in learning not to say that, as far as they're concerned, the Emperor is walking around stark naked.

Naturally I hope that there are some children who really like my stories, and I do sometimes get letters written outside of school which are clearly sincere in their approval. And naturally I hope that, since writing letters is not to everyone's taste, there are many more children who really like my books but don't bother to tell me about it. I myself have only written one fan letter in my life, and that was to ice skater Sonja Henie in 1938.

Actually, the most enthusiastic fan letter I ever got, though it was far from an articulate critical appraisal, was not a letter at all but a kind of graffiti, and I only heard about it secondhand. I was told by a librarian in Charlotte, North Carolina, that someone wrote in the front of a copy of *Goody Hall*, "This is a good book and funny, too. Right on, Brother! No jive, funky Mama!" Actually, I suppose you could say that it is criticism of a sort, in one sense, since the writer says that the book is funny in addition to being good, not good because it's funny. But still, nice as it is, I prefer a sharply critical letter I got two years ago from a reader named Lainie Moskowitz:

Dear Miss Babbitt,

I'm a ten year old girl, who is in the fifth grade and I have just finished reading your book, *The Eyes Of The Amarayllis* [sic]. I'm writing this letter to inform you of some of my thoughts while reading your book. I didn't think it was very interesting because many of the parts were too confusing to understand. The book didn't give any explanation about what happened to the grandfather when he drowned. In my opinion I would [have] liked information about Jenny and Gran. I would have liked to know more about their lives and a better description of their character. I was expecting a more exciting ending. If you write another book that you think would be more interesting I'd be glad to read it.

How fine that is! If only I could have expressed my judgments as well and as fearlessly as that

at the age of ten! Or even twenty! Lainie Moskowitz will never eat snails unless she truly wants to, and that makes her a rare human being—an honest one. It's good to be honest about books, good to see clearly with your critical eye. Naturally I hope that Lainie Moskowitz will not be so candid in a Christmas thank-you note, but literary criticism should have nothing to do with good manners.

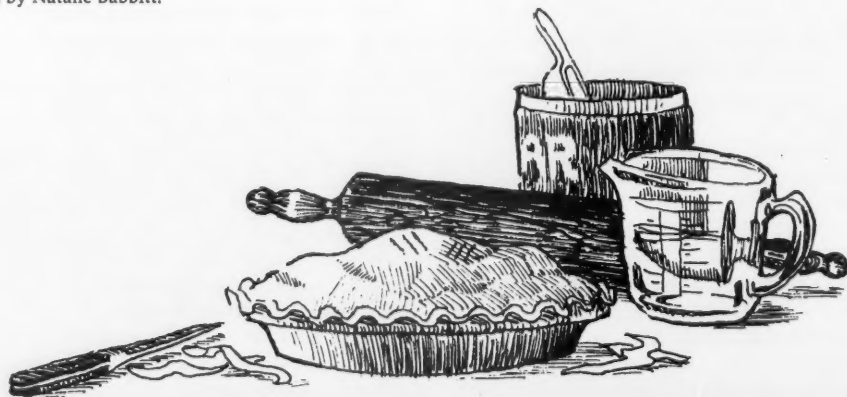
Somebody said to me once that she thought writers made the best book reviewers because only another writer could know how much pain, suffering, and hard work went into producing a book—that another writer would be able to take those factors into consideration in a critical review. But alas, pain, suffering, and hard work do not by themselves make a book worth reading. We may indeed, as writers, be able to identify with each other, but in most cases our work habits are so different that it is dangerous to make assumptions. And anyway, if you use pain and hard work as criteria, you would perforce have to be sympathetic with everything produced by people who try hard, from burned toast right on up to the Second World War. Books have to stand on their own merits, quite apart from their authors' efforts and intentions, and quite apart from the egos of their authors. The point is whether the book works, not whether its author did.

In the children's book world we are very kind to each other—kind to the point that we often mislead each other, I think. At the least our

reviewers search for redeeming virtues in otherwise impossible books, and at the most they are gently chiding. This does not do the writer or the reader any favors—or the poor parent who must rely on reviews or else read every one of the two thousand books published every year. There is a tendency to believe that anyone who writes for children must be good-hearted and well-intentioned, which can scarcely be proven one way or another; and even if it were true, it certainly has nothing at all to do with the quality of the product. I said in a speech once, when I was younger and had more opinions than I do now, that there were too many bad books being published for children. During the question period following, an irate woman stood up and said, "Well! *Everyone* can't write good books!" The implication was that there was something undemocratic and elitist about the idea that only the good ones should be published.

My feeling about that now is not what it was then, when I wanted to ban all books that didn't measure up to my opinion of what a good one was. Now I feel that it's far more important for children to make up their own minds about what they like, to be able to say why, and to learn to have confidence in their own decisions. How else will they be able, later on, to choose well among everything from brands of toothpaste to candidates for public office—choose well and independently instead of leaning like grass in the prevailing wind to all the various forms of public and private pressure?

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I'm not suggesting that teachers, librarians, and parents stay out of the selection process. And I know because I have three children of my own—at least, they used to be children—that it's often extremely difficult to get them to read at all. But in the best of all possible worlds, the adult in charge doesn't say, "Here's a good book. The *Horn Book* says it's good, the *New York Times* says it's good, the jacket blurb says it's good, and I say it's good. Go and read it." Neither does she or he say, "Here's a good book. Go and read it and tell me *why* it's good." That's a little better, but it still misses the point. Instead, the adult in charge might say, "Here's a book some people think is good. Go read it and tell me what *you* think."

That would be lovely—to be asked by an adult what you think about something another adult has done and to know that what you think is actually important, whether you agree with those adults or not. It implies, happily, that you are something other than a sponge.

And anyway, it's a given of human nature that we are deeply suspicious of what other people claim will be good for us. Other people always want to improve us in one way or another. To bring us up to snuff. Leafing through a recent issue of the *Horn Book*, I found the following phrases in reviews and advertisements: "outstanding graphic design, splendidly printed and beautifully bound;" "ingenious charm . . . instantly appealing;" "what a treat!" "a marvelously human portrait;" "the most extraordinary book to shine under the Christmas star;" "children around the world love these books." My reaction to all this is apt to be, "Oh, yeah?"

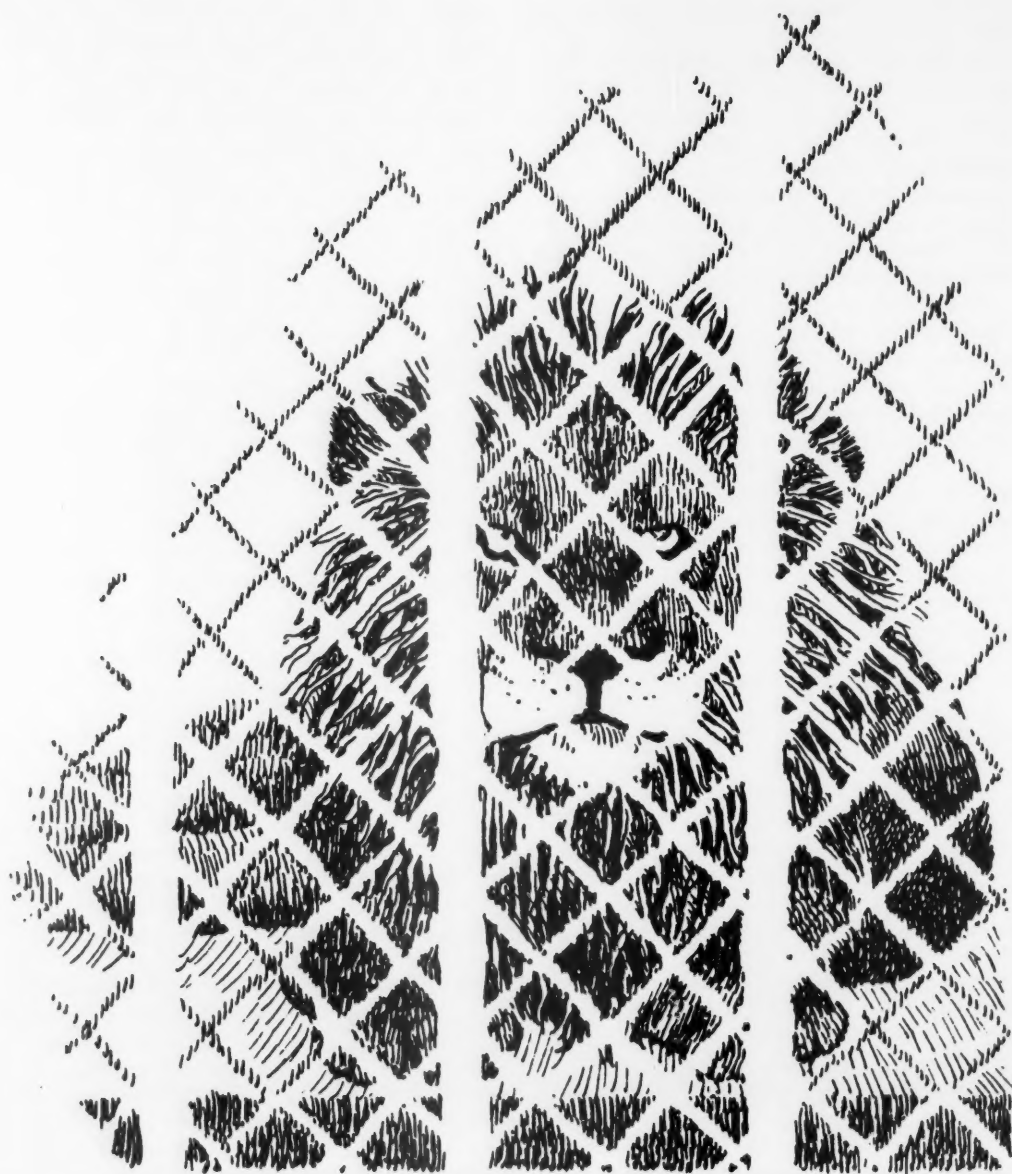
Of course, I write reviews myself, occasionally, and though I try to avoid hyperbole, often I do feel strongly that a book is wonderful. Or terrible. And I will try to say why as clearly as possible in the space allowed. But I certainly don't expect people reading the review to say, "Oh, gee, is that so? Well, I guess that's right, then." I hope people will say, "Oh yeah?" and then go see for themselves.

Putting something into print, whether it's fiction or criticism or even advertising, lends it the force of authority somehow. Print is formal and assertive. It looks as if it knows what it is saying. Italics leap out, exclamation points insist, a line of type goes marching on across the

page like God trampling out the vintage. Learning to say "Oh, yeah?" is a vitally important defense against it all. We are not, after all, going to find many advertisers, or authors, or newspaper columnists who will finish their pieces by saying, "Of course, that's only *my* opinion. You may feel that our instant Hollandaise sauce tastes like Elmer's Glue." Or, "You may feel that Sydney Carton was doing a far, far stupider thing than he had ever done." Or, "You may think that killing Herman Tarnower, the diet doctor, was a dirty job, but somebody had to do it." And since they won't say these things, but will instead go right on insisting, in print, on their own versions of the truth, we must learn early to read defensively, to read critically, to try as hard as we can to make up our own minds. To try, in other words, to take pride in thinking for ourselves.

Probably what we need to do is to demystify books, along with a number of other things. There is nothing holy, after all, about a piece of fiction except possibly to the author. And as a rule, writers who feel their works are holy are probably not very good writers, by virtue of the fact that a workmanlike detachment is at some point in the creative process absolutely essential. That's one of my more recent opinions, by the way—Number Eleven, if my memory serves me, which it often doesn't. Anyway, whoever said, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" was clearly nervous about being stoned in the streets. Good manners notwithstanding, it's getting increasingly important to have a critical eye and to respect your own brain even if the expert standing next to you at the cocktail party or in front of you in the fifth grade classroom turns hostile. As long as you know why. As John Simon, the *New York* magazine drama critic said in a recent interview, "A critic needs to be able to explain his position."

The only reason why I don't still go around thumping on podiums about how bad most of our books for children are is that it doesn't seem much to the point anymore. And anyway, it turns out to be a very, very old complaint. I reread *The Water-Babies* two weeks ago to make sure it was as dreary and silly as it seemed when it was first read aloud to me forty years ago. It is. It holds up wonderfully. But toward the end, in a section where the hero is on a long journey



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to a place called The Other-End-of-Nowhere, there is a paragraph that reads this way:

And first he went through Waste-paper-land, where all the stupid books lie in heaps, up hill and down dale, like leaves in a winter wood; and there he saw people digging among them, to make worse books out of bad ones; and a very good trade they drove thereby, especially among children.²

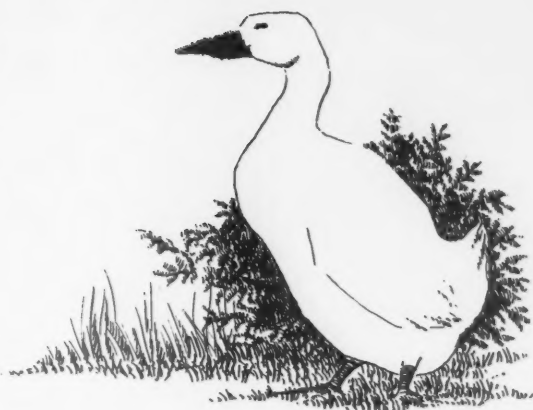
So of course it occurred to me that it may take one to know one.

In fairness, I should tell you that Charles Kingsley wrote *The Water-Babies* in 1863 when the world was rather a different place. No doubt we should make allowances, especially as he is not around now to defend himself. Nevertheless, I wish we would be more careful how we bandy the term "classic" about, particularly if we catch ourselves using it to scare little children.

Once, when I was in high school, we managed to get my father to church for a midnight carol service on Christmas Eve. The church was so crowded with people getting their annual attendance in in the nick of time that, since we neglected to come half an hour early, we and a few dozen luckless others were relegated to the parish hall where we had to listen to the service over a loud speaker. About ten minutes into it, the loud speaker went dead. We all sat there like good lambs in utter silence for quite a while, and then my father said in a clear voice, "This church doesn't need a minister. What this church needs is a good electrician."

The effect of this remark was exactly like that of the child's remark in the story of the Emperor's clothes. It appeared that everyone in the parish house agreed. And it appeared that everyone was grateful to my father for bringing the subject up. There were general exclamations of relief, and then we all got up and went home to bed. If it had not been for my father's fearlessly voicing an opinion, we might have sat there trying not to look at each other for hours and hours, afraid to move for fear of being stoned.

The years ahead are going to be full of increasingly difficult problems, all of which will require courage and a good critical eye in the solving. My Opinion Number Twelve is that if we want a peaceful old age, we'd better start



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now training our children to think. I would like to suggest that wherever there are two or three gathered together, they be sat down to listen to that certified classic *The Water-Babies* and then be encouraged to express themselves. It's as good a place as any to begin, and it just might make a difference.

NOTES

1. Charles Kingsley, *The Water-Babies* (New York: Macmillan & Co, 1979), a facsimile of the 1928 edition from Mayflower Books, Inc., p. 121.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

A children's book author, illustrator, and critic, NATALIE BABBITT is perhaps best known for her well-wrought story about the consequences of immortality, *Tuck Everlasting* (1975), which was a 1977 Hans Christian Andersen Honor Book. Her books also include *Goody Hall* (1971), *Kneeknock Rise* (1970), *The Devil's Storybook* (1974), and *The Eyes of the Amaryllis* (1977). Currently she is working on a biographical novel for adults.

This article is based on a lecture the author presented at the Library of Congress on November 16, 1981, for National Children's Book Week. The lecture was sponsored by the Center for the Book and the Children's Literature Center in the Library of Congress.



Things Nobody Ever Heard Of

Jessie Willcox Smith Draws the Water-Babies

BY MARY M. ISON

Once upon a time there was a little chimney-sweep, and his name was Tom. . . . He lived in a great town in the North country, where there were plenty of chimneys to sweep, and plenty of money for Tom to earn and his master to spend. He could not read nor write, and did not care to do either; and he never washed himself, for there was no water up the court where he lived. . . . He cried half his time, and laughed the other half.

"He felt the net very heavy, and lifted it out quickly, with Tom all entangled in the meshes."

Tom is caught by a distinguished naturalist who has just expounded to his companion, the little girl from the manor house, on the nonexistence of water-babies. Unable to swallow his pride and admit that such creatures do exist, the professor impulsively flings Tom back into the sea. The little girl recognizes Tom as a water-baby and rushes after him, causing a tragedy which is central to the story's plot and moral. Jessie Willcox Smith's illustration focuses on the relationship between Tom and the little girl.

So begins *The Water-Babies*, Charles Kingsley's classic story for children. Written in 1863, the tale has endured for more than a hundred years. It has been published in over fifty editions, produced as a three-act play, and even translated into Hebrew. Most recently it was republished in 1976 by the Garland Publishing Company and in 1977 by the Hart Publishing Company. The story is about Tom, who becomes a creature known as a "water-baby" and has many adventures. As with many children's classics, one can appreciate deeper meaning behind the plot.

Tom's life as a chimney sweep is miserable. He works under an agent, his "master," who drinks away most of the money Tom makes. Tom has no family, has received no education, and, worst of all, is never clean. One day he is called to sweep the chimneys in a grand manor house. When he gets lost in its many flues he ends up in a bedroom where he is startled by the sight of a sleeping girl, the whitest, cleanest, "most beautiful girl" he has ever seen. As he stares at her, Tom catches a glimpse of his own reflection in the bedside mirror and is appalled to realize that in comparison with this lovely girl he is nothing but a grimy urchin. Ashamed by the contrast, he bursts into tears and his loud sobbing wakes the girl. As she screams in fright the whole household runs to her defense, and

Tom is chased from the manor. He makes his way to a neighboring stream and crawls into it in an effort to become clean. The fairies of the stream, however, have a different idea—they turn him into a water-baby.

Water-babies are tiny four-inch-high creatures who look like human babies. Since they live underwater they have gills, which look like lace collars around their necks. To those who might doubt their existence the author remarks, "there are a great many things in the world you never heard of; and a great many more nobody ever

heard of and a great many things, too, which nobody will ever hear of. . . ."

As a water-baby Tom is very clean. Kingsley points out, however, that although Tom is outwardly pure, his soul has not changed from his chimney-sweep days. In the freedom of his new world Tom can express both the good and the bad sides of his personality. He quickly makes friends with the other water-babies, meets the Salmon, has adventures with the Lobsters, and teases the Trout.

The beautiful girl Tom had seen in the manor house dies and reappears as his tutor, teaching him about goodness. Tom realizes that to be really good, and thus really clean, he must make a journey to do a special kindness for someone else, and the rest of the story recounts this journey and the attempt to do the good deed.

Kingsley's tale lends itself wonderfully to illustration, with its make-believe creatures and interesting characters and vignettes, and through the years more than two dozen artists have illustrated it in various editions. Jessie Willcox Smith made thirteen color drawings in oil, charcoal, and pastel for a 1916 edition published by Dodd Mead & Company. Twelve of these original works were received by the Library of Congress in 1935 from the artist's estate. The thirteenth is in a private collection.

The life and work of Jessie Willcox Smith is well documented in Michael Schnessel's *Jessie Willcox Smith* (London: Studio Vista, 1977). Trained as a kindergarten teacher, she gave up that work when she discovered she had a talent for art. She studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, under Thomas Eakins, and at the Drexel Institute of Arts and Sciences, where she was a student of Howard Pyle. Pyle

(continued on page 101)



Linley Sambourne, illustrating an edition of *The Water-Babies* published fifteen years before the book illustrated by Jessie Willcox Smith, emphasizes the melodramatic aspects of the episode where the professor catches a water-baby in his net. This type of illustration was common before Howard Pyle and his students introduced a more spontaneous, freer style of art for children's books. Sambourne was known chiefly as a caricaturist and cartoonist but illustrated several children's books, including *Three Tales of Hans Andersen* and *The Real Robinson Crusoe*.

From *The Water-Babies* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1901).

Here is the scene as portrayed by Frank Nankivell in an edition published the same year as Jessie Willcox Smith's illustrations. Born in Australia, Nankivell studied art in Japan and San Francisco before becoming an illustrator for several magazines and newspapers. The influence of Japanese woodcuts is clearly seen in his illustrations for *The Water-Babies*.

From *The Water-Babies* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1916).







"He felt how comfortable it was to have nothing on but himself."

After fleeing the manor house, Tom tumbles into a stream to wash himself off and the fairies of the stream turn him into a water-baby.



"Oh, don't hurt me!" cried Tom. "I only want to look at you; you are so handsome."

Tom's life as a water-baby is adventurous but lonely, for he finds no other water-babies to play with him. In this scene Tom meets the Salmon and is told of water-babies the fish have seen out at sea. Tom decides to search for them.

"No. She cannot be dirty. She never could have been dirty."

Tom is overwhelmed by the clean beauty of the nobleman's daughter and is suddenly ashamed of his own griminess. The contrast between the two figures is well illustrated by Jessie Willcox Smith.



"And Tom sat upon the buoy long days."

Reaching the sea, Tom is disappointed to find no water-babies.

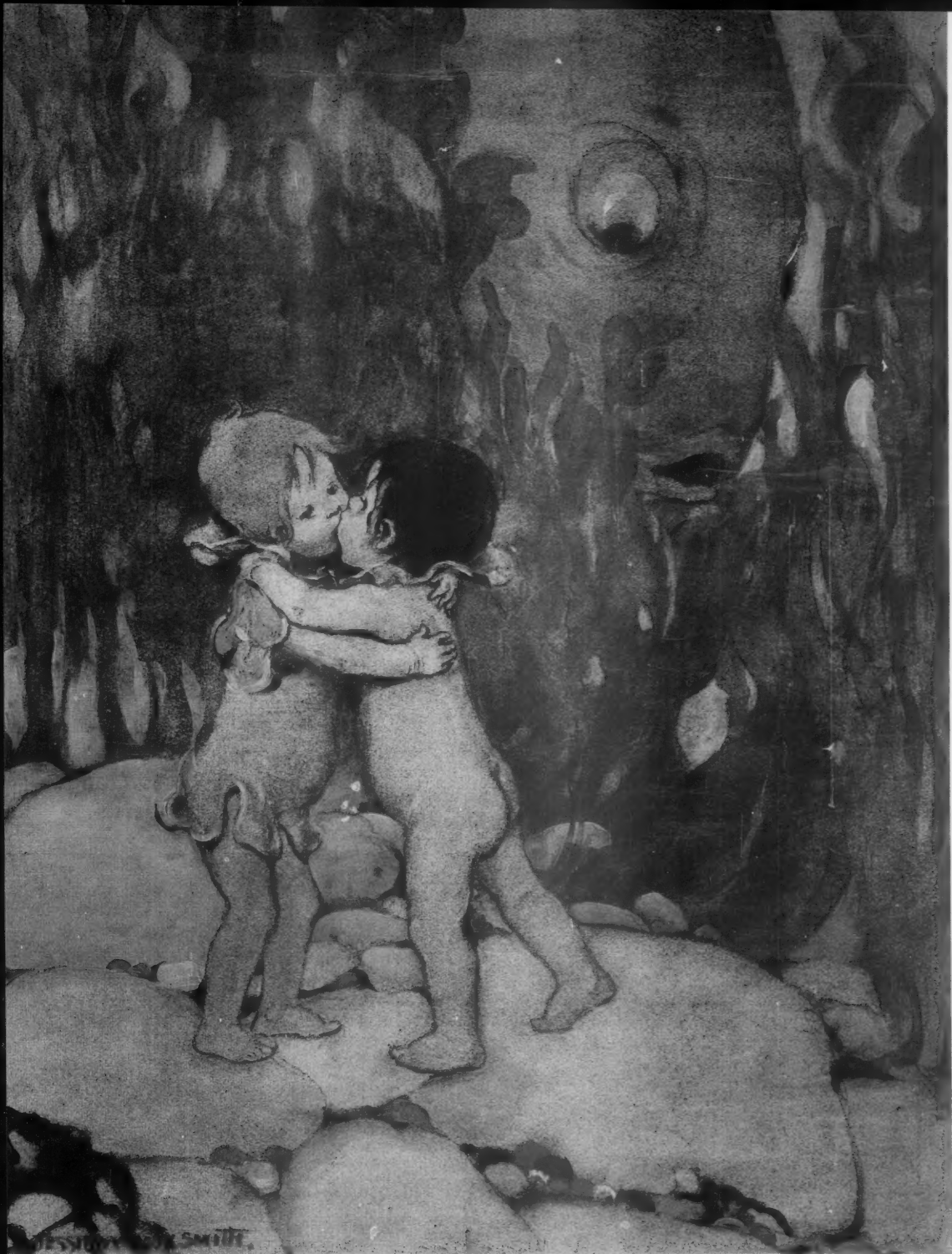


"Tom reached and clawed down the hole after him."

Tom frees his friend the Lobster from a trap. It is this good deed that enables Tom to see the other water-babies.

"They hugged and kissed each other for ever so long, they did not know why."

The water-babies greet each other enthusiastically when they meet for the first time.







"Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby"

Taught how to be good by Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid, the water-babies are loved and mothered by her sister, Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby.



"And there he saw the last of the Gairfowl standing up on the Allalonestone, all alone."

Tom's journey to do the ultimate good deed takes him to unfamiliar faraway places. The Gairfowl is one of the creatures he meets along his way.

"Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid"

The water-babies are often visited by Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid, who teaches them how to be good. Through her Tom realizes that he must make his soul as clean as his body, a task that involves making a long journey to do a good deed.



provided his students with solid artistic training, and, through his professional contacts, obtained for many of them their first assignments as illustrators. In addition to giving Jessie Willcox Smith a start, he launched the careers of such illustrators as Maxfield Parrish, Violet Oakley, N. C. Wyeth, and Elizabeth Shippen Green.

It is not surprising, given her experience with children and her training in art, that Smith established herself as an illustrator of children's books. Between 1897 and 1932 she was the artist for over thirty-five books, also creating magazine covers and illustrations for such contemporary magazines as *Collier's*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Scribner's*, and the *Woman's Home Companion*. She executed her work for *The Water-Babies* at the height of her career, and it is believed that she willed these illustrations to the Library because she thought they represented the best of her work.

These drawings are included in the Library's Cabinet of American Illustration, a collection of original art created for book and magazine publication. Housed in the Prints and Photographs Division, it includes works by artists such as A. B. Frost, Charles Dana Gibson, Edward Penfield, Alice Barber Stephens, and Howard Pyle. Begun in 1932 by William Patton, the former art editor of *Harper's Magazine*, the collection continues to grow, with recent acquisitions including works by Dora Wheeler, F. G. Atwood, and Frederick S. Church. It forms one of the principal collections for the study of nineteenth- and twentieth-century illustration.

Charles Kingsley, author of *The Water-Babies*, was educated at Kings College, London, and at Cambridge. A man of many talents, he was Chaplain to Queen Victoria, professor of modern history at Cambridge, and vicar of a rural parish outside of London. He wrote *The Heroes*, a retelling of Greek myths, for his three oldest children, and created *The Water-Babies* espe-

"It took the form of the grandest old lady he had ever seen."

Toward the end of his travels to do his good deed, Tom meets Mother Cary, who makes creatures out of seawater. She directs Tom on the final part of his journey.



Published in 1954, this illustration by Roberta MacDonald shows a more modern view of the professor catching Tom in a net. All the dramatic elements of the picture have been removed and we are left with a friendly, cheerful, and somewhat false interpretation of this episode in the story.

From *The Water-Babies* by Charles Kingsley, (Garden City, N.Y.: Junior Deluxe Editions, 1954). Copyright © 1954 by Roberta McCormick and Roberta MacDonald. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

cially for his youngest son. Both works became children's classics.

Although of vastly different backgrounds, the team of Kingsley, the nineteenth-century man of religion, and Smith, the twentieth-century woman of art, brought about a book which is both charming and earnestly believable. Jessie Willcox Smith's illustrations invest the water-babies with such reality as to provide credence to Kingsley's story. Because she takes his tale seriously and portrays its subjects in ways which relate to human experience, she forces us to take the story and its message seriously too. At the same time, her delightful and charming drawings remind us of the final words of Kingsley's classic: "But remember always, as I told you at first, that this is all a fairy tale, and only fun and pretence: and, therefore, you are not to believe a word of it, even if it is true."

MARY M. ISON is a reference specialist in the Prints and Photographs Division.

1001 Nights at the Opera

BY CHARLES JAHANT



Massachusetts-born Geraldine Farrar, photographed in Paris in 1909 as she was preparing to inaugurate the Metropolitan Opera's subsidiary theater, the New Theater, as Charlotte in Massenet's *Werther*.

My parents were devotees of the theater, the concert hall, and the opera and usually went three times weekly. I was the firstborn and, since the baby-sitter had not been thought of just yet, I nearly always accompanied them. I was told I heard Enrico Caruso in a Cleveland concert when I was two. I heard my first opera when I was eight. It was *Faust* and had a distinguished cast, as did the *Aida* and *Carmen* which followed it. I had the opportunity of hearing many of the great instrumentalists of some sixty years ago onward, among them Paderewski, with his tangled mass of long, orangeade-colored hair. My father did not care much for the movies, though we frequently went to Lyman Howe travelogues. I can recall going downtown with Mrs. Longton, a motherly woman who worked for us, to see a Metro (long before MGM) picture starring a married couple, May Allison and Harold Lockwood. It was called *Hearts Adrift* and much of the action took place on a small boat. I was five and had five cents "pin money" which I thought was for the purchase of pins. We visited a Woolworth's and I am sure I bought some animal made of celluloid, the precursor of plastic.

Many concerts took place in the afternoon and women performers always wore huge hats. I can recall Ernestine Schumann-Heink's hat, which was decorated with flowers on wire stems. When she sang a particularly vehement number the flowers shook en masse. This was also true of a pianist who was, I suppose, either Teresa Carreno or Olga Samaroff-Stokowski.

I missed Sarah Bernhardt and Eleanora Duse but saw much of Edward Hugh Sothorn and Julia Marlowe in Shakespeare, Robert B. Man-

Elisabeth Rethberg, a "perfect" singer, as Verdi's *Aida*. Originally from Dresden, she was a Metropolitan Opera treasure in works by Mozart, Puccini, and Wagner, as well as Verdi.





tell, Otis Skinner, George Arliss, Julia Sander-son, Billie Burke, and countless others, including, a little later on, George Burns and Gracie Allen. And there was Anna Pavlova (twice) and her sweet, sad smile as she would fall over backwards into her waiting partner's arms. Not to mention her "Gavotte," which made people laugh, and her "Dying Swan" which made me feel sad.

Plays in those days were much more fun than they are now. For one thing, casts were huge and there were some fine theatrical effects. I dimly remember one play in which a forest caught fire and some people were alarmed lest the theater itself catch fire. And there were Civil War and World War I plays with lots of soldiers and sailors. One effect I did not care for was the sounds of the race track being created by horses running on a deafeningly noisy treadmill.

Then I started school and acquired a best friend whose father owned two movie theaters; one a first-run palace and the other a shoot-'em-up Westerns house which played Buck Jones, Jack Hoxie, and Tom Mix, none of whose films were shown in the better houses. I was not allowed to visit this second theater, but I saw many films at the Strand and at the "nabes" (as *Variety* still calls the neighborhood movie places) at the child's price of ten cents. I became an expert on silent films.

I must have been in the eighth grade when a good friend named Charles Jones brought to school his collection of movie stars' photos. He had Tom Mix and Douglas Fairbanks and, inexplicably, Anna May Wong, who had a modest career in Chinese parts and is now a cult figure. I was fascinated. Charles explained that you wrote to the star in Hollywood and enclosed a dime or a quarter (depending on the importance of the actor) and received in return an autographed photo. I entered into the game in a big way and acquired a small collection of the bigger names: Wallace Reid, Mary Pickford, and Douglas Fairbanks, Theodore Roberts, Rudolph Valentino, Richard Dix, Bebe Daniels, and William S. Hart, a Shakespearian actor turned cowboy. Hart's Westerns were the only ones ever to play

in the big downtown theaters. In the photo I acquired he had a craggy and stern face and was pointing a six-shooter at the onlooker. Most of the photos were signed in ink, but a few were rubber-stamped and, worse, some had had the signature painted on the negative.

My father was an engineer and an inventor of radio parts. We had one of the first radios. One night I was listening to a New York program through headphones, and a woman, apparently a movie actress, began to talk about her latest film, *When Knighthood Was in Flower*. She invited all listeners to write to her in care of the station if they wished to receive her autographed photograph. With all the static I did not quite catch her name. It sounded like Alice Brady, a reputable stage and screen actress, so I addressed my letter to her.

A week or so later I received a letter with a return address (engraved in palest blue) of Cosmopolitan Studios, New York City. Inside was a letter thanking me for my interest and expressing the hope that I would patronize *Knighthood*. It was signed, in a distinguished finishing-school hand, Marion Davies, the it's having a round circle over them. A genuine letter from a live movie star! A few days later came a duplicate letter, this one also signed but in a completely different and rather ordinary script. This was a blow. And when two separate photos arrived with different signatures on them I was not at all elated. A twelve-year old can feel let down by tricky adults. My father explained that the studios probably employed a dozen people to answer the stars' mail, and this was made clear to me when the studios began to enter their names at the bottoms of their stars' photos, most of which now had facsimile signatures. Much of the fun went out of collecting, and my thoughts turned elsewhere.

At home we had a monstrosity large mahogany Victrola and a fine collection of records of all kinds. I did not know it at the time, but my ear for music was unusually fine-tuned. I could hear a piece once and retain enough of the principal melody or melodies to hum it or to pick it out on the piano afterwards. If I listened to an overture or an aria two or three times it was mine forever. As I mentioned above, I was hearing all the great concert artists and many of the opera singers. I was especially interested in opera

Rosa Ponselle, one of the finest voices the United States has ever produced, as Norma, the capstone of her career (1927).



Maria Jeritza, the fascinating Viennese soprano of the Metropolitan Opera, who gained notoriety by singing the big air from Puccini's *Tosca* while lying prone near the footlights.

because there was a story and lots going on—dueling, a ballet, and scenery changes. I continued to attend the movies but opera, in Cleveland, Chicago, or New York, now occupied a bigger part of my life. On Sundays my father would drive downtown and buy the *New York Times* and the *Philadelphia Public-Ledger* and by reading them I could keep up with musical activities at the sources.

Among my favorites at the time was Giuseppe De Luca, who always seemed so happy during his curtain calls. Right on the stage in the first

part of *Pagliacci* he would eat an orange, and that endeared him to me. I recall also a *La Bohème* in which, during the cavorting of the Bohemians in the last act, a basin clattered to the floor. Rather than pick it up, De Luca gave it a healthy kick and sent it off into the wings. He was my kind of an artist.

Naturally, when I first learned that opera singers usually answered requests for photos—a few, rather than the thousands sought by movie fans—I wrote to De Luca and received back a splendid original 1915 print of himself as Figaro, with the dedication in white ink. This is a treasured part of my collection.

Giovanni Martinelli was another happy-seeming person, and I admired him over his more vocally gifted colleague, Beniamino Gigli. The latter always reminded me of a pouter pigeon, although his high notes (which he arrived at by looking down at the floor) were much more beautiful than Martinelli's rather constricted and steely ones. In return for my twenty-five-cent offering, Martinelli obliged with a signed photo and some extras. This, by the way, was several years after my movie star fiasco.

Among those who did not reply to my requests were baritone Titta Ruffo, who had the loudest voice I had ever heard until that time, and the immense Feodor Chaliapin. In three cities I managed to hear this giant among singers in five of his roles, some more than once. When he would die on the stage, I felt that he had really died. His eyes would roll up into his head and he would collapse, sometimes rolling down flights of steps. His small, pitiful gasps of breath were heartbreaking, and there would always be a long pause before he would come out (alive) before the curtain. I also failed with Ezio Pinza, although all three gentlemen are now represented in the collection.

Among women singers, my favorite was the exquisite Lucrezia Bori. She was Spanish and radiantly beautiful on the stage, although off-stage she was more chic than beautiful. Each of her characterizations differed from the others. She (except for the enchanting Jarmila Novotna)

Spanish soprano Lucrezia Bori, the darling of the Metropolitan Opera from 1912 to 1936, as the Duchess of Towers in Deems Taylor's *Peter Ibbetson* (1931). She was an artist of great delicacy and taste.





was the most aristocratic of Violettas, the most fragile of Manons, the sprightliest of Norinas. If her *Mélisande* was not the equal of Mary Garden's medieval one, it was a wonderful second best. Like Garden she was conscious of how she looked to an audience and her costumes were chosen with great care. Also like Garden, she demonstrated a theatrical disdain for their wear and tear. How many times did I see her, in the Saint-Sulpice scene in *Manon*, garbed in an imposing gown of pink and cloth-of-silver, crawl on her knees after the retreating Gigli. She was the first female opera star I wrote to. I asked for a particular photo by Alfred Cheney Johnson, which she promptly sent.

Rosa Raisa of Chicago was another of my early favorites. She sent a photo of herself in her original *Turandot* costume from the world premiere of this Puccini work. Mary Garden, also of Chicago, was unusually generous. Rosa Ponselle sent a nice picture with a rubber-stamped signature.

I had acquired a postcard photo of the fascinating Geraldine Farrar and sent it to her with a request for her signature. She returned it with a letter, which was to lead to many more when I was stationed in New Guinea and the Philippines during World War II. A singer Farrar and I both admired was the vibrant Wagnerian soprano Frida Leider. For some reason I wrote her in French and she replied with a photo dedicated in that tongue.

It was sometimes difficult to know to whom to write next. The great Gigli sent several photos and after the war, a small one with my first name spelled in the Italian manner. Tito Schipa sent two. Charles Hackett sent one I had specifically requested—a souvenir of his manly Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*. Giacomo Lauri-Volpi sent a postcard or two. These were Depression times, and many of my letters were either lost or ignored. Edward Johnson, like Hackett a believable actor, failed to reply. Richard Bonelli, in a mimeographed note, asked for a contribution of

Irish tenor John McCormack, circa 1907, as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. One of the greatest tenors of the century, he sang in London, Paris, and Monte Carlo and with the Manhattan and Metropolitan Operas in New York, as well as with the Boston and Chicago Operas.



Mary Garden, the inspired "singing actress" (1909), wearing the earrings and priceless strings of pearls given to her by King George I of Greece. The undisputed "Empress of French Opera" she reigned in New York and, primarily, in Chicago between 1907 and 1931.

\$1.50 for his destitute musicians' fund. This was as much as I was paid then for hand mowing three large lawns. He is represented in my collection in the Library by unsigned photos only.

A Metropolitan Opera Wagnerian soprano whom I admired was the late Gertrud Kappel. She was, frankly, ugly even under stage lights, but her impersonations were usually moving, and none more than her Elektra, from which I did not recover for days, if not weeks. She would never reply, nor would her agent. Finally, I was forced to pay the highest price for any single



Lotte Lehmann at Salzburg (1927) in her poignant and powerful characterization of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, one of the supreme achievements of the modern operatic stage, which she performed under Arturo Toscanini's direction.

photo I have ever bought for one of her. Recently, a generous friend, upon learning that I had no signed Kappel, presented me with one of her as Brünnhilde. A colleague of Kappel's in Munich was a soprano with the captivating name Felicie Hüni-Mihacsec, whose Mozart recordings I admired. Once, while in Munich, I walked to her apartment on an extremely rainy

day, asked if I might purchase a photo, and was told icily that they had all been destroyed during a wartime allied air raid. The same story was told to me by the great basso, Tancredi Pasero. But, upon hearing this, my Milanese landlady declared that he lived right behind her and had done so for years. She took me with her to visit the singer, and he presented me with a nice picture in an engraved envelope.

Lotte Lehmann was as generous in ordinary life as she was wonderful on the stage. My collection must have seven or eight photos of her, most of them signed. Similarly Kirsten Flagstad always responded warmly. So did the silvery voiced Elisabeth Rethberg, considered by the American Association of Music Teachers to have had the most beautiful voice in the world.

A great gain for my collection was the acquisition from the advertising agency that handled the appearances of the Metropolitan Opera in Cleveland. I wrote them, asking if they had any duplicates they would consider disposing of. In reply came a shipment via express collect of a box containing well over a hundred photos of many of the greats and near greats of the 1920s. To Rosa Ponselle I sent four photos asking for her signature on them, and this time she came through handsomely. I did the same with a number of other singers and the results were good.

The collection is perhaps richer in examples of people who either sang little or not at all in America. Two of the rarer ones are photos autographed by Aureliano Pertile, whom I heard in an open-air *Otello* in 1938. Pertile was the tenor king of La Scala during Arturo Toscanini's directorate. Another famous *Otello* of his time was Francesco Merli. Two favorites of the Paris Opéra were the classical Germaine Lubin and the more mundane Fanny Helder, both of whom reputedly used their physical allure to ensure their positions in the musical world. I amassed seven photos of them. Mafalda Favero, who performed in the States for a brief time, was one of my great favorites and one of the best Butterflies in my experience. Two America-born sopranos with large European followings were Lina Pagliughi and Franca Somigli, the latter a singing actress. The lovely Tiana Lemnitz, supposedly Hitler's favorite soprano, sent two photos, and Rudolf Bockelmann, a princely Wagnerian baritone sent four in exchange for





four packs of Lucky Strike cigarettes and some cigars.

The tradition of barter was carried on by me to a limited degree. I had a fine photo of the towering contralto Maria Olszewska, but I wanted a signed one. From Vienna she wrote that she would send me one in exchange for two cans of Campbell's mushroom soup. The result is a fine pose as Oktavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*. Another artist whose records gave me much pleasure was a retired Berliner, Emmy Bettendorf. She wrote several piteous letters asking for coffee and cocoa, some packets of which reached her. She sent a photo. Another Berliner who, through unsympathetic casting, failed in a career with the Met was Gertrud Rünger. She sent some photos in return for cigarettes and cocoa. A more unusual request came from a bull-voiced Italian baritone, Ettore Nava, who sang in cheap opera productions at the New York Hippodrome. I wrote to him after the war, while stationed in Cairo. Back came a letter containing a silhouette of his foot and a request for a pair of Egyptian turned-up-at-the-toes slippers. I had to have them specially made up in a red leather, at a cost of sixteen dollars. Apparently they pleased him, for he sent seven or so photos.

On the other hand, in a Roman antique shop I asked for old photos of *artisti canori*. The reply was negative until, as I was leaving, the proprietor opened a drawer and pulled out thirteen cabinet photos, two autographed in purple ink on the verso, of the "King of Baritones," Mattia Battistini. Some of these I traded off, but there must be six or seven in the Library's collection. The price we eventually agreed upon was not substantial, and a real bargain in view of today's prices.

I patronized a number of music shops in Cairo. One of them had an oversized photo of Caruso on the wall. I admired it and offered to buy it, but the manager always refused to part with it. Just before I left Cairo I paid a last call on him and he presented me with the Caruso photo as a going-away gift. It hangs on my bed-

Kirsten Flagstad, the greatest Wagnerian soprano of the twentieth century, photographed in Chicago (1937). In addition to a voluminous, warm voice, she had a simple, pleasing personality.



The beloved Lotte Lehmann, photographed backstage at Salzburg in 1935 as the Princess von Werdenburg in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, in which she was often heard in America.

room wall and will accrue to the Library eventually.

I have often been touched by the generosity of certain rival collectors and friends, who have parted with items of their own. A large autographed Isolde of the Swedish Nanny Larsen-Todsen was given to me because she had been my first Isolde. And friends in Belgium, Argentina, and Spain have been equally thoughtful.

There are actually two Jahant collections. The Library's consists of over two thousand photo-



graphs in all sizes. Since its donation, I have begun a second which contains many interesting examples, but which I feel is too small to make an impressive gift. In this second collection, there must be a hundred photos of Mary Garden alone. A long-standing project of mine is to complete a book on this singer, but I lack the necessary time. I plan to utilize many of these photos in the book, if it is written. Some of them are extremely rare and some from her earliest years have never been reproduced before. There are also a number of recently acquired creations of the official La Scala photographer of the 1930s, all in his own inimitable style with projected backgrounds. Alas, the current vogue is for candid shots from dress rehearsals. Any semblance of artistry is gone; the camera could just as well have taken these without human assistance. There are, however, works by artist photographers in the main collection. Fernand de Guldre of Chicago is one. Setzer and Fayer of Vienna, Angus McBean of Britain, Villani of Bologna, and Ellinger of Salzburg are also represented. And, of course, there are many by house photographers like Mishkin of the Met and Matzene of Chicago. Their subjects make their work notable, whereas their art was negligible. They photographed people as McDonald's makes hamburgers. Often in pictures by Mishkin one sees tattered backdrops, and worn carpets; there is one of De Luca gotten up as Rigoletto and sitting on some grocery boxes that are barely hidden by an Oriental rug. Late in his career Mishkin turned out some superb photos. These, I suspect, were made by apprentices with an eye for composition and art. I may as well mention that a book devoted to the work of Mishkin and compiled by Robert Tuggle of New York is due to be published this year.

This, then, is a quick rundown on the Jahant Collection as I remember acquiring it. As long as I live, it will continue growing.

The noted tenor Tito Schipa congratulates soprano Claudia Muzio in her dressing room at the Metropolitan Opera following the first act of her return vehicle, *La Traviata* (1935).

All the illustrations in this article are from the Charles Jahant Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress.



Lotte Lehmann in her original portrayal (Hamburg, 1916) of the blind Greek woman in piano virtuoso Eugène d'Albert's opera *Die toten Augen*.

A reviewer, radio panelist, teacher, lecturer, and recently appointed member of the Advisory Council of the Metropolitan Opera Archives, CHARLES JAHANT is currently critic for *Opera News*, *Opera* (London), and *Lyrice* (Paris). He reviewed music of the Washington scene for the *Christian Science Monitor* from 1958 to 1978, and has written program notes for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Metropolitan Opera, and Avery Fisher Hall, and liner notes for Time-Life Records. He has also written entries for the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera*, the new *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, and Harvard-Radcliffe's *Notable American Women*, as well as articles for such magazines as the *Saturday Review*.

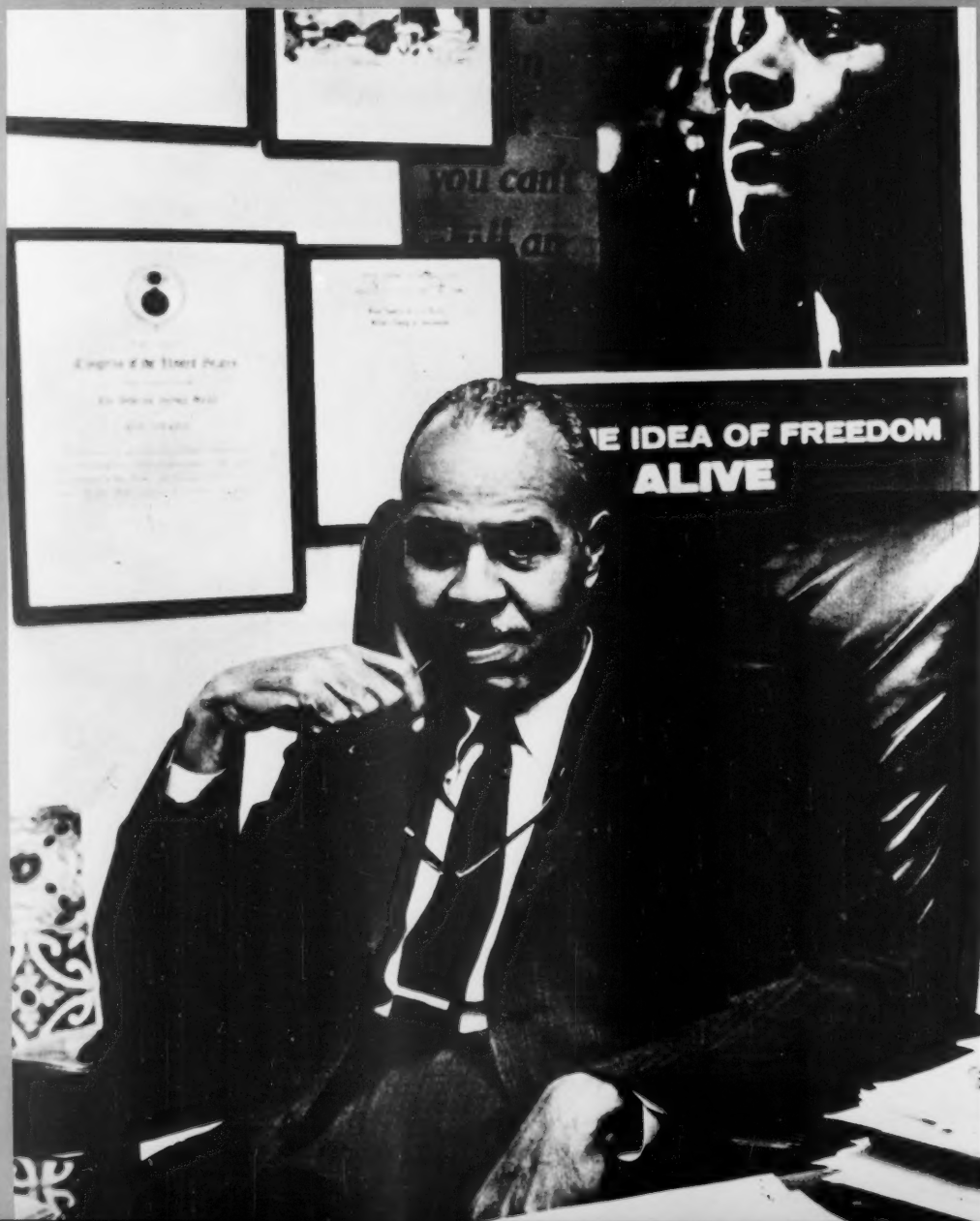
Mr. Jahant donated his collection of photographs of opera singers to the Library's Music Division in 1980.

A Tribute

ROY WILKINS

1901-1981

BY SYLVIA LYONS RENDER





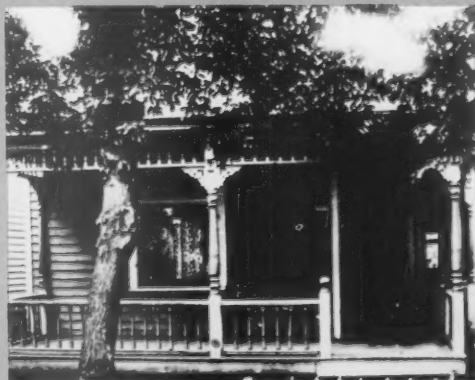
Young Roy grew up in a harmonious interracial environment unmarred by the open practice of segregation and discrimination. Here he is on a bike trip with boyhood friends during the period he was attending Mechanical Arts High School, before 1920.

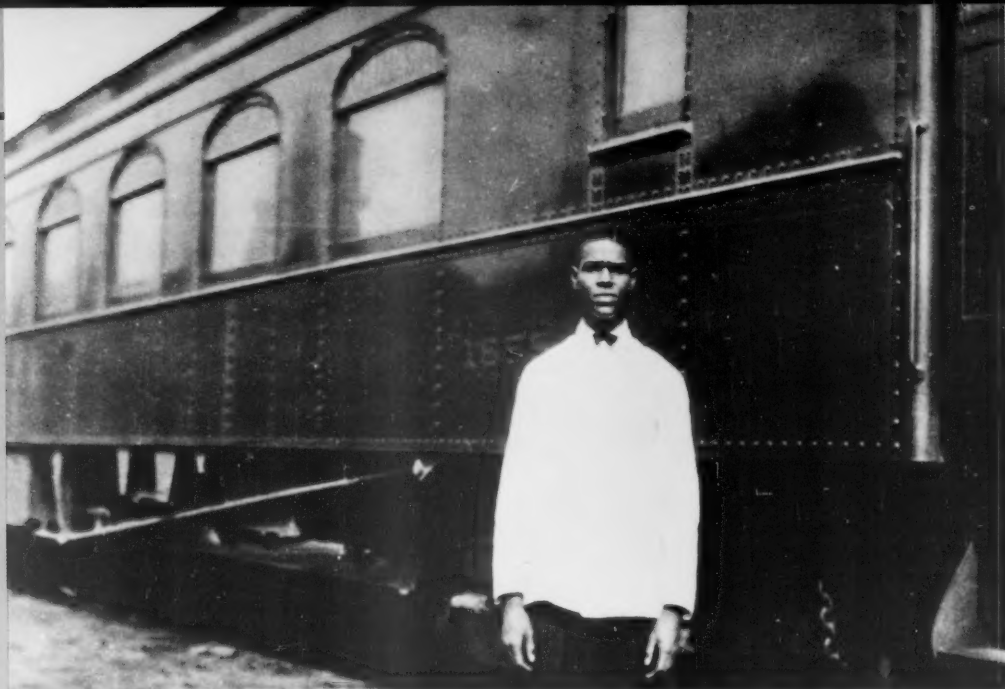
Roy Wilkins is pictured here in his office in 1963 in a typical posture during one of the rare moments of quiet he needed as the leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at the height of the civil rights struggle during the 1960s. The citation to his left reflects the success of his appearances before congressional committees to persuade them to pass or enforce legislation favorable to his cause.

The weeping woman on the poster behind him is the widow of Medgar Evers, the NAACP national secretary for Mississippi, who was shot in the back outside his home on June 12, 1963.

The personal papers of Roy Wilkins and the records of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have been donated to the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. The photographs presented here are courtesy of the NAACP national office in New York.

Roy Wilkins was born on August 30, 1901, in this house on La Clede Place in St. Louis, Missouri, the first child of the Reverend William D. Wilkins and the former Miss Mayfield Edmondson. The family, which grew to include another boy and a girl, resided here for only a few years. Mrs. Wilkins died when Roy was four years old, and the three children went to St. Paul, Minnesota, to live with their maternal aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Williams.





Like many aspiring young men of his time, Wilkins sought summer employment to help defray the cost of going to college. While he was at the University of Michigan (1919-23), his uncle got him a job as a dining car waiter on trains in the Great Lakes region—considered a plum because of the good tips. He is pictured here in waiter's attire outside a dining car, probably in the railroad yard just before a scheduled run.

Almost immediately after Wilkins graduated from the University of Michigan, he began the professional career to which he devoted most of his time for the next fifty-four years. His first position was as a reporter and columnist for the *Kansas City (Missouri) Call*, a black weekly. His column, "Talking It Over," became a forum for civil rights advocates, and his general proficiency gained him quick promotion to managing editor of the paper by its publisher, Chester Franklin.

Wilkins's journalistic skills and strong protests against segregation and discrimination caught the attention of the brilliant black scholar W. E. B. Du Bois, who was then editor of the *Crisis*, the official organ of the NAACP. In the fall of 1931, Walter White, secretary of the association, reputedly the largest and most influential civil rights organization in the United States, invited Wilkins to join the staff as assistant secretary. This picture of Wilkins was taken in 1934, when he succeeded Du Bois as the *Crisis* editor.





By the time Wilkins participated in the March 2, 1956, press conference with Auerhine Lucy and attorney Thurgood Marshall, director and special counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (shown here), he had become the executive secretary of the association. Earlier Wilkins had held the posts not only of assistant secretary (1931-49) and editor of the *Crisis* but also those of acting secretary (1949-50) and administrator (1950-55). As time passed Wilkins had become increasingly involved in setting the policy for the NAACP's sustained efforts to make first-class citizenship a reality for black Americans.

The NAACP had played an active role in the desegregation of the armed forces during the closing years of World War II and thereafter; in the institution of fair employment practices; in voting; in making more public and private housing available; in the desegregation of public facilities,

including transportation; and in the desegregation of schools, especially after the far-reaching Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954, outlawing segregated public schools. Although the Court had made favorable rulings on the attendance of blacks at public institutions of higher learning as far back as 1938, the mandates were more avoided than followed. Consequently, when the state of Alabama was ordered to admit Auerhine Lucy to the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, students and townspeople rioted to prevent her from remaining at the university. Suspended because of the rioting, she accused university officials of conspiring to keep her out of the university. In turn the Board of Regents expelled her. Guided and advised by the NAACP during the public outcry which followed, Miss Lucy presented her side of the story to the press.



Eleanor Roosevelt served on the NAACP board of directors and encouraged her husband's concern for black citizens. She is credited with the enlargement of the president's "black cabinet," an advisory body; no doubt she also influenced the appointment of a substantial number of Afro-Americans to high places in the government and helped pave the way for increasing numbers of blacks in civil service jobs. Even after President Roosevelt's death, Mrs. Roosevelt continued to work for better race relations.

Roy Wilkins is shown here with Jack ("Jackie") Roosevelt Robinson and Edward Kennedy ("Duke") Ellington, two recipients of the Spingarn Medal, "a gold medal to be awarded for the highest or noblest achievement by an American Negro during the preceding year or years." Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1946, the first Afro-American to play on a major league team. He received the Spingarn Medal in 1956 "for his pioneer role in athletics." Duke Ellington was similarly recognized in 1959 "for outstanding musical achievements."



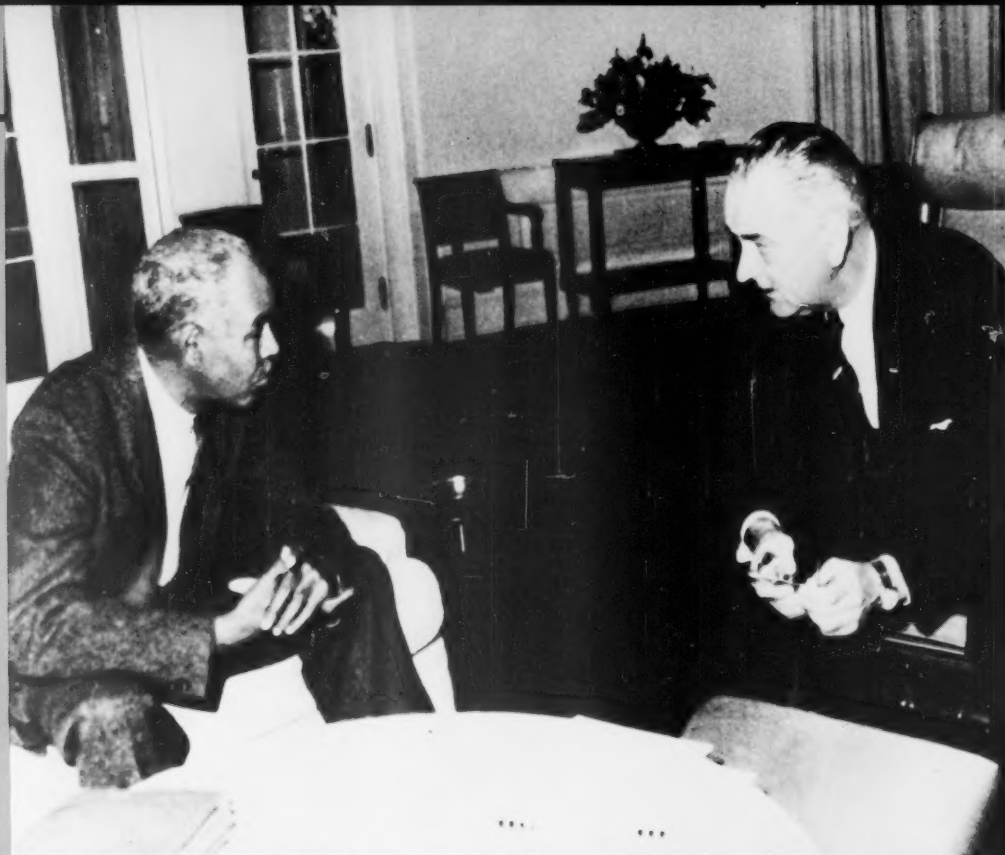


Roy Wilkins and the NAACP played a greater role in the march on Washington on August 28, 1963, than is generally recognized, especially in organizational and support services. The idea for such a demonstration, the largest of its kind in U.S. history, originated with A. Philip Randolph, who hoped it would promote the passage of a pending civil rights bill forbidding discrimination in public accommodations and employment. The photograph shows a few of the 250,000 participants on the Mall heading for the Lincoln Memorial.

Recognizable in the forefront of the photograph are the following leaders of some of the participating organizations: Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., Washington lawyer and civil rights activist; Whitney M. Young, Jr., executive director of the National Urban League; Wilkins; Randolph, founder and head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Walter Reuther, a longtime civil rights activist as well as labor union leader, and Arnold Aronson, secretary of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a coalition of human rights organizations. Not shown is the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, whose "I Have A Dream" speech further memorialized the occasion.



Roy Wilkins had a high regard for Dr. Martin Luther King, both as a professional and as a person. Aware of the limits of his own power and cognizant of the fact that he and King had the same ultimate goals, Wilkins was not disturbed that King was frequently the center of public attention. Without the support of the NAACP, some of King's efforts would have suffered. Here the two men have a cordial meeting at a gathering in New York City during the 1960s, while Mayor Robert Wagner looks on.



Roy Wilkins and President Lyndon B. Johnson met in the White House to review some of the strategies employed to secure passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, "which eliminated all qualifying tests for registration which abridged the rights to vote on the

basis of race or color." More civil rights legislation was passed under Johnson's administration than under any previous one. Working together behind the scenes on such legislation and on the issuance of executive orders, Wilkins and Johnson developed a mutual respect that blossomed into friendship between both the men and their families. One of President Johnson's last official acts was to give Wilkins the nation's highest civilian award, the Freedom Medal.



Arthur Spingarn and Hubert Humphrey were Wilkins's friends and supporters for many years. Arthur Spingarn, an attorney and the brother of Joel Spingarn, became involved with the NAACP in 1910 because of the Steve Greene extradition case in which the NAACP was involved. He became legal counsel for the association and then chairman of the Legal Committee until, in 1939, Spingarn succeeded his brother Joel as president of the NAACP. Wilkins's ties with Humphrey began when the two met in Minnesota during their school years and were strengthened by their mutual advocacy of civil rights causes after Humphrey began a political career in Washington.

Roy Wilkins was known and respected around the world. In recognition of his unremitting efforts on behalf of the disadvantaged everywhere, he was chosen to head the U.S. delegation to the International Conference on Human Rights, which met in Tehran, Iran, April 22–May 10, 1968. Here Wilkins is greeted at a royal reception for the conference delegates by the Shah and Empress Farah.

Over the years the NAACP had complained, with justification, about the exclusionary practices of American labor unions. Nevertheless, Wilkins was always willing to talk with labor leaders and to form political alliances if there were any possibility of improving employment conditions for Afro-Americans. Here he is chatting with George Meany, president of AFL-CIO, at a black-tie dinner in 1970. By that time this union had adopted a more liberal stance, sometimes using the threat of charter revocation to force a local to accept black members.





Wilkins's active participation in humanitarian causes won him commendations and honorary degrees from institutions and organizations with like concerns in this country and abroad. Among the honors bestowed upon him were the Spingarn Medal in 1964, the Freedom House Award in 1967, the Theodore Roosevelt Distinguished Service Medal in

1968, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1969. Hebrew University in Jerusalem made Wilkins an honorary fellow in 1972.

Wilkins is shown here in June 1965 receiving from Cardinal Spellman an honorary doctorate degree bestowed by Iona College, while his wife, Mrs. Aminda Badeau Wilkins, looks on. Although this is the first appearance of Mrs. Wilkins in this group of photographs, she was a staunch supporter of her husband's work as well as a professional social worker.



Wilkins visited Dr. Golda Meier, prime minister of Israel, in March 1972, when he was in Jerusalem to participate in the ceremony honoring him as an Honorary Fellow of Hebrew University.

Whenever Wilkins had a few hours to call his own—and this was seldom—he spent some of them driving or working on his sports car. "I drive a black TR 3," he told the *Boston Herald Traveler Magazine* in 1969. "It's eight years old. It's my only recreation, my only hobby." Wilkins maintained the vehicle himself, and it was still in excellent condition at the time of his death.

Roy Wilkins was a man of strong purpose and great dedication. He will long be remembered for his efforts to make the world a better place not just for blacks but for all races.

SYLVIA LYONS RENDER is the specialist in Afro-American history and culture for the Library's Manuscript Division. Dr. Render's latest book is *Charles W. Chesnutt* (1980).



Recent Publications

of the Library of Congress

Creativity: A Continuing Inventory of Knowledge by the Council of Scholars.

1981. 37 pp. \$3. Compiled by James H. Hutson. Free from the Central Services Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

This pamphlet derives from discussions of creativity held by the council at a symposium in November 1980 and at a subsequent meeting held in the spring of 1981. Issues addressed in this first publication in a continuing series include problems regarding creativity, and aspects of the associated issues that need further examination. Also included is a suggested list of readings in creativity.

The 1812 Catalogue of the Library of Congress: A Facsimile.

1982. 167 pp. \$15. Introduction by Robert A. Rutland, editor-in-chief of *The Papers of James Madison*, University of Virginia; indexes by Lynda Corey Claassen, Center for the Book. For sale by the Information Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

Few Americans realize the extent to which their representatives in the Congress rely on books to shape the laws of the nation. Since its establishment in 1800, the Library of Congress has symbolized the intimate connection between knowledge and the development of our democratic republic. This catalog of the Library's holdings in 1812 is a record of legislative needs and interests. It strikingly reinforces Thomas Jefferson's observation that there is no subject "to which a member of Congress may not have occasion to refer." The statutes and rules governing the use of the books, included as part of the catalog, are further evidence of the seriousness with which Congress regarded its cumulation of knowledge past. The publication of this facsimile edition from an original copy in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division of the Library is enhanced by a historical introduction and three separate indexes to author and title, dates of publication, and places of publication.

The First Booklist of the Library of Congress: A Facsimile.

1981. 16 pp. \$3. Foreword by Dana J. Pratt, director of publishing, Library of Congress. For sale by the Information Office, Washington, D.C. 20540.

The legislation establishing the Library of Congress in 1800 provided for "the purchase of such books as may be necessary for use of Congress of the said city of Washington and for fitting up a suitable apartment for containing them." The London firm of Cadell & Davies was selected to fill the order of 728 books and 3 maps. The invoice that arrived with the books was printed, and therefore became the first publication of the Library of Congress. Available now in facsimile, it offers the opportunity for the historian and book lover to see which books were regarded important for the legislature of the new American Republic.

In Celebration: "The National Union Catalog, Pre-1956 Imprints."

1981. 49 pp. \$5.95. Edited by John Y. Cole, executive director, Center for the Book. For sale by the Information Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

The completion of a fourteen-year publishing venture was celebrated by a symposium held in January 1981 that featured speakers involved in the development and use of the 754 volumes of *The National Union Catalog, Pre-1956 Imprints*. Papers published as a history of this achievement in recording bibliographic data for imprints in library collections across the country include an essay by William J. Welsh, Deputy Librarian of Congress, a discussion of the published catalog as a tool for research libraries by Gordon R. Williams, the story of its editing by David A. Smith, views from John Commander, its publisher, a survey of its use by antiquarian booksellers by Bernard Rosenthal, and sagas of its use by scholars Nicolas Barker and William B. Todd.

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The International Flow of Information: A Trans-Pacific Perspective.

1981. 47 pp. Edited by John Y. Cole, executive director, Center for the Book. Viewpoint Series, No. 7. Free from the Information Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

Based on the proceedings of a three-week traveling symposium held in June 1979, this booklet explores the free flow of information across the Pacific, both to and from the United States. Topics range from the import and export of books and the condition of indigenous publishing in the East Asia-Pacific region to the use of computer-based information systems. Authors include Theodore Waller, Datus C. Smith, Jr., Michael S. Keplinger, Leo N. Albert, and James D. Isbister. Comments from participants in the symposium are also included.

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